

A
MARVEL
MONTHLY

SCIENCE FANTASY IN TV, CINEMA AND GRAPHICS

NO 16 50p

STARBURST

ALIEN ART

RON COBB ON
CREATING A MOVIE

PLANET OF THE APES

HOW TV MADE A
MONKEY OF A TOP
MOVIE SERIES

TV FANTASY

FROM CAPTAIN VIDEO
TO THE OUTER LIMITS

NIGEL KNEALE

TV WRITER OF 1984
AND QUATERMASS
SPEAKS OUT

KRONOS

A LOOK BACK AT
THE FIFTIES
S-F MOVIE MONSTER



PLUS - SPECIAL FEATURE ON



Walt Disney's

BLACK HOLE

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THE PLANET OF THE APES SAGA—SEE PAGE 30

STARBURST

SCIENCE FANTASY IN TELEVISION, CINEMA AND GRAPHICS

Volume 2, Number 4

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We've some good news, some bad news, and some more good news this month. Here's the first bit of good news! This issue we celebrate completing our second year of publication on Starburst! (Remember how I said in issue one's editorial that we intended to be around for a 1-0-0 time?)

Now the bad news: In order to keep the cover price within everybody's reach we've had to sacrifice 6 pages of our colour — we're down from 14 to 8 glossy colour pages.

Now the other bit of good news: To make up for losing six colour pages, we've added 14 black and white pages! That's right. If Starburst 16 feels thicker, you know why... it is thicker. From 48 pages to 56.

I remember once being told it's fatal in publishing to draw attention to any shortcomings by admitting them, but we figure we owe you an explanation. So here it is.

We preferred the smaller — but more colourful — look it would be easy to pass the charge off by baffling you with unknowns, paper cost increases, labour charges, and so on. But instead, because you've all proven such a sincere, loyal audience here is the sincere truth.

DISTRIBUTION. That's the key to success. No matter how good a mag is, unless it actually reaches the shops it just can't sell — no one knows it exists. And that applies to any magazine.

We constantly receive letters from you saying you can't find Starburst. Why? Poor distribution. But it's no one's fault. Unless someone makes the newsagent aware of the mag, he isn't likely to order it from his wholesaler. And unless someone makes the wholesaler aware of the mag, he isn't going to order it from the distributor. And unless someone orders it from the distributor, he isn't going to order it from us — the publishers.

We shout, we scream, we fight. But we're at the wrong end! It really is down to you, the reader. Only if you place an order with your newsagent, instead of spending time and money searching all around town, can you help us — and yourselves. You know the mag exists, your local newsagent/Smith's/Menzies/whoever maybe doesn't. So tell them about us! Tell them our distributor is Comag of West Dreyton. Tell them to order it.

They'll be glad you did, because if they know it exists, and know you want it — they'll get it. And probably a few extra copies too, so someone else will thank you for your trouble when he/she discovers we exist.

Listen, you're always telling us how much you like Starburst, so go tell your newsagent too! We're still Britain's number one and only science fiction media mag, so let's try to keep it that way, huh?

And if you still have problems getting hold of Starburst, write to me about it.

Who knows, one day we might have a hundred pages for 50p!

Best wishes,

Dez Skinn

Dez Skinn/Editor.

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RON COBB ON... ALI

Ron Cobb was born in Los Angeles in 1937 — “one of the few people who were actually born there . . . most people emigrate there”.

His family moved to Burbank when he was five years old. Cobb attended Burbank High School and grew up in the Fifties. He was always more interested in drawing and fantasy than in academic achievement. His drawing talent showed at an early age and was encouraged though the young Cobb was motivated to draw not so much by a love of drawing *per se* but rather by a necessity to bring his fantasies to life.

After leaving school Cobb found himself in the US Army, as a courier in the Intelligence Section, carrying secret documents around San Francisco. In the last of his three years in the Army Cobb was posted to Vietnam as a signal corps

draughtsman tucked safely away in an Army base outside Saigon. Though he saw little action, Cobb discovered a great source of inspiration for his cartoons.

After emerging from the Army Cobb began a bohemian existence, doing little but drawing and painting, which led to his work being exhibited, this in turn leading to a lot of commercial work.

Ron Cobb had worked with Forrest J. Ackerman on some production paintings for a version of *Lord of the Rings* (the rights to which passed through Ackerman's hands at one point) and this led to Cobb's painting several covers for Ackerman's magazine *Famous Monsters of Filmland*.

This interview was conducted by Phil Edwards before the film *Alien* was actually completed.



KEN

Starburst: You've been involved with movies, however tentatively, throughout your professional career.

Ron Cobb: Yes. All very tentatively, with people trying to put together pilots and never quite succeeding. Some of it was a little more elaborate but nothing memorable.

There was a period when I worked for a while making props, just after high school, with Ellis Berman who used to make rubber creatures for science fiction movies. I was apprenticed to him with a fellow I knew in high school, Ken Forsee. We worked in rubber and fibre glass, making movie props and it wasn't too long after that Ken and I started working on our own, got involved with Roger Corman and did some tentative designs for a number of films. They were far too elaborate and expensive for Corman. We never actually got



anything on the film but we did some beautiful mock-ups and proved our abilities to ourselves. We wanted to do skin-tight chrome robot costumes with everything operating — an early *Threepio*. I had it all worked out with Ken who was an amazing technician and could make anything I designed. We worked out of his garage and spent a number of years trying to

"Ray Bradbury sent my cartoons to *Playboy*."

sell Corman and others on the use of extraordinary new materials, plastics, rubbers and latex, but we were so far ahead of our time that no one was willing to pay that kind of money. *How long were you involved with the LA Free Press?*

About five years directly, and that was almost from the beginning of the *Free Press* in 1965. I joined them just a few months after they started. Prior to that, I'd sometimes do a cartoon on something that interested me, with the idea of selling it to *Playboy* or anyone that was in the market for black humour cartoons. Ray Bradbury sent some of my cartoons to *Playboy* with covering letters, but I never sold anything.

However, I kept at it and I just happened to have one of these cartoons with me when I went to the *Free Press* with a friend of mine who was a contributor. They saw the cartoon and asked if they could print it; just a little cartoon, depicting a horrible desert with the sun beating down. In the middle is this little stand with a horrible little man inside waiting to sell things to anyone who happens to crawl by. Of course, all he's selling is salted peanuts and potato chips. They printed it, beautifully reproduced on page two. I was delighted and told

"It was the beginning of five years of cartoons."

them I'd do another the next week. They had no money, but I was pleased to do something, perhaps even a little more political.

This was the beginning of five solid years of weekly cartoons. As the weeks passed, I became delighted with the idea that I could try wider, larger concepts, reminiscent of George Grosz and Goya instead of endless caricatures of presidents, which has always been the obvious preoccupation of normal cartooning.

It became a tremendous learning experience, a whole period of experimentation with access to an audience of a hundred thousand readers, week after week. Eventually the *LA Free Press* grew to such an extent that I no longer had personal contact with the staff. It wasn't the same and I had to stop because I lost my excitement about it. A few years later I started again, so now I start and stop every once in a while. When I'm really excited I'll do it, like when I was with *The Digger* in Australia, but I have to enjoy doing it. I can't do it when I'm expected to do it. I'm not that professional, I'm not that disciplined.

Do you dislike discipline?

No. I just don't have it. I have to ride on a wave of enthusiasm to get anything done, or if I'm up against a deadline, or people are expecting me to do something, then I can do things that



In space no one can hear you scream.

I'm not all that excited about.

What happened after your five years with the LA Free Press?
I don't know what happened. It's all a blank now! After the Sixties died, although I never really identified too much with that period, I had a two year slump. I barely managed to keep myself alive. It was the worst slump I've ever had. All my friends were going through the same thing. No-one expected it. Everybody thought they were above and beyond the Sixties. The only thing that really saved it for me was in 1972, when I was offered a trip to Australia by the *Cultural Foundation of the Australian Union of Students*. So being in this big slump, I thought "great", it would snap me out of it. I also suggested Phil Ochs, so they could raise some money with concerts. They bought that so we went for a two month tour. That's how I met Robin Love, who was running *Aquarius*, the cultural foundation. At the end of the two months Phil went back to the States and I stayed. That got me out of the slump

"They asked me to design the ship for *Dark Star*."

and I started working for *Digger*, and I've been cartooning and painting and becoming more and more involved in films ever since. *Dark Star* and other things as well.

*Who approached you about *Dark Star*?*

Dan O'Bannon. I met him initially in the period when I was doing the cartoons. He called me up once saying he wanted to meet me because of the cartoons. I learned that he wanted to get into films. He'd just come out from St Louis to LA. I barely remember meeting him. He finally got onto the subject of making films, particularly fantasy films. That really rang a bell. I had a science fiction childhood, so we had a very animated conversation about all the things that hadn't been done on the screen and wouldn't it be great if we could do that some day. Many months later he called again. He was then a cinema student at USC and was making *Dark Star*. He showed me the footage they had made but none of the effects were done and he was stuck with the design of the ship. They wondered if I had any thoughts and I scribbled a design on a napkin. Dan became enthusiastic and asked me to do a three view plan of it which they made a model from.

What did you think of the end result of that film?

When I first saw the footage that Dan had put together, all the live action and some of the interior sets, in the fragmentary form, I was absolutely floored — shocked at how competent it was. Dan personally was most responsible for the look of the sets which was the part of the film which impressed me most. I couldn't believe this was a student film, but at the same time I was appalled at how primitive the acting was, how student-like many of the characters were and how the story line was a bit derivative and transparent.

Nonetheless, it had a strange tension about it which was compelling. There was a humorous element submerged

"George Lucas had followed my cartoons."

throughout the film, which I felt should be stronger. Dan was aware of it because, of course, his ending is hilarious. They shot additional footage which was pure slapstick. It highlighted the humour of the rest of the film and when I finally saw the film I was delighted. It was much better than I ever thought it could be. I think now it's almost perfect. Whatever it lacks in other areas, it more than makes up for it in this incredible raw directness. It's so real, and it's such an unpretentious film — so clever.

*What happened after *Dark Star*?*

Well, *Dark Star* was one of the few things I did through the period of my slump that I was pleased with. Basically, I started a lot, did a lot of environment posters and things which I could just not finish to my satisfaction. A crazy period, really strange. It didn't end till I went to Australia, and as I say, I've been able to maintain my interest and enthusiasm in most of



Above: The interiors of the factory ship *Nostramo* were designed by Ron Cobb. In this scene *Dallas* (Tom Skerritt), Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) and Ash (Ian Holm) discuss the distress call picked up by the ship's computer. Right: A selection of cartoons by Cobb.

what I've done ever since; I've never had another slump like that.

*How did you get involved in *Star Wars*?*

Dan primarily, because every time he would get work through *Dark Star*, he would strongly recommend that they should use me. In the case of *Star Wars*, Lucas had followed all my cartoons, he knew my work, but he had no idea I had this other side — that I liked to do design work, science fiction and such — and he was more than willing to try me and everyone was quite pleased.

*Did you just work on the *Cantina* sequence?*

That's all, really. I also did some of the computer screens for Dan and I drew all the still pictures put on when *R2D2* inserted the map of the Death Star and you see the various levels flash on. Also, when I was doing the aliens for the *Cantina* scenes in *Star Wars*, Dan said "Look at some of the stills of the stuff they shot in Tunisia" and suddenly we came to this picture of a stormtrooper sitting on the back of a big lizard and it looked an awful lot like a painting I did for John Milius, almost the same pose and everything. Strange! I didn't think anything of it, just a coincidence, and then many months later I was talking to Milius and he said "Your lizard —



my painting's in *Star Wars*. Lucas was up here one night and he saw it and said he wanted to try to put it in *Star Wars*." So they started to build the lizard, but they were only able to build the upper part, they weren't able to build the legs. They ended up with camel-like legs whereas mine had great big iguana-like legs. I just made it up. It was an image I thought John Milius would like. He'd just finished *Wind and the Lion*, then.

Which aliens did you design for the Cantina sequence?

The one with the big curved hammer shaped head, the blue

"I designed several creatures for the cantina scene."

creatures with the red wrap-around eyes, also the first creature you see in the Cantina — the funny little face with the goat horns.

Was Rick Baker in charge of the whole unit designing those aliens?

I can't determine exactly. There were many people involved in it. He certainly had a lot to do with it. All that work was done in California. They actually rebuilt the Cantina in California just to get additional cutaways and put my aliens in the

corners half obscured by smoke and that's why you only see them by themselves. They added them to the scene because Lucas didn't think that what they had done in England was elaborate enough and he wanted to fill out the bar with stranger creatures.

Did you work with Rick Baker?

No, I didn't actually. I hadn't even met him at the time but I have since. I worked directly with Lucas. I did paintings of each of the creatures, little diagrams of how they worked and he just sent them right out to be built and that was it.

*So after *Star Wars* came *Alien*?*

First there was *Dune*, which I was supposed to do with Dan. I'd signed contracts with the producers, but it collapsed before I got to Paris. That was the beginning of Dan constantly easing me into various productions he worked on. *Alien*, with all its ups and downs, and with all its frustration and disappointments has been extremely enjoyable and stimulating. Some days it looks like it's going to fall short of what it could be and as I've always been a fan of this type of film, it bothers me a lot when I see that happening. But it's been extremely valuable as a learning experience for me and I know I'll benefit. I'm a much better designer now and that's really

what I want to do. The simplest, most straightforward function on films like this that I'm most comfortable with is visual design, but I'm also very keen on — and have made a lot of contributions to — the writing.

What did you design on the film?

H.R. Giger designed most of the Alien artifacts, including the creature. I designed as much as I possibly could, as much as there was time for, primarily the interiors of the earthship. I'm supposed to be an illustrator on the film but for me to simply illustrate, to produce artwork of someone else's concepts, is virtually impossible. I couldn't do it for more than a week. I have no resources, no energy, no discipline to merely draw something someone else has designed. So in the whole year I've worked on the film, I've only done one or two drawings that were true illustrations.

Did you design the exterior of the ship as well?

"I'm pleased with the general look of Alien."

Well, it's a conglomerate of many of my drawings, synthesised in a way I had no control over and put together by Brian Johnson with a fair amount of input by the director, Ridley Scott. It's not that clear cut.

Does the creativity outweigh the frustrations you must feel when doing something like this?

It hasn't been as frustrating for me as it has been for Dan. I didn't write the thing, so I can see many possibilities in interpreting the script.

Have you seen any of the rushes yet?

Yes, I've seen how the bridge looks on film.

Are you happy with it?

Yes, I'm pleased with the general look of the bridge set. It's quite novel. I've never seen anything quite like it before. It's very believable and it strongly suggests that you're surrounded by some vast machine. It doesn't look like a set. I like that. It does look a little crude to me in some of the close-ups but it's hard to judge how anyone outside the film would react to it.

What kind of problems did you encounter on the film?

I think the biggest problem of the film is that the people working on it who might find themselves most at home with

"It's hard to identify with the people in Alien."

this kind of film don't have the power, and the people who have the power don't particularly like this kind of film. It creates a strange tension. Everybody wants it to be as good as possible but there's a limit to the input we can each put into the film and you can only go so far in representing a potential audience to the director and producer. One of the problems I foresee for the film is in the weakness of the characterisation. The crew of the spaceship is almost as empty as are the astronauts in 2001. I think it's a shame because it's going to be hard for the audience to identify with these people.



Do you think that might change by the time shooting has finished?

It's amazing. The whole film is in a constant state of flux. Script revisions are going on every day. Things that haven't been shot yet are still being re-written and that's why Dan is feeling better, because he and Ron Shusett are having a substantial input into these last minute script changes. They're fixing it quite well, strengthening it considerably.

What are some of the artistic influences you have had through the years?

One of the visions that had tremendous impact on me was the work of Chesley Bonestell. I was probably in tenth grade or so when I first saw the book *Conquest of Space*. Suddenly everything fell into place and I wanted to be a second Chesley Bonestell! His work was extraordinarily fantastic and at the same time it had an impact in a secular, pragmatic world because it was based on science, yet it was as amazing and as awesome as any sort of religious imagery or fantasy. I loved

"I was always a bit offended by fantasy."

that combination because being middle class American, I'm very pragmatic and secular so I was always a little bit offended by fantasy — not so much now because I understand it better. At the time I really liked this combination of something I could accept rationally and at the same time was as awesome as possible and beyond comprehension. Bonestell just fitted that perfectly. I know George Grosz had a great deal of impact on me and that was reflected in the cartoons, and also Goya. I went through a very bleak period being very interested in grim

subject matter and with a fascination with disaster and death. An interesting way of handling it is to talk about it and draw it.

What kind of books do you read?

A lot of non-fiction, history, some science fiction — not much any more. I collect visual reference books. Books about the sciences always interest me. I've learned most of what I know from talking to people. All my strange friends in high school went into the sciences and I used to follow them around at Cal Tech, sit in on classes with them and climb around the two

"I've always felt very comfortable with scientists."

hundred inch telescope at Palomar. I've always been very conversant with scientists, always felt very comfortable with them. I've also had the role of technical adviser on *Alien* unofficially, which I enjoy.

*Have you any plans after *Alien*?*

Nothing definite. I'm supposed to call a number of people when I get back to the States about working on other films.

We'll look forward to your next project. Ron Cobb, thank you.

Thank you.

*In Part Two of The Alien Interviews, we talk to writer and Visual Design Consultant, Dan O'Bannon, about his background and influences, dreams for the future, work on *Dark Star*, *Star Wars*, the aborted *Dune* project and his plan to blow up Los Angeles with Ron Cobb!*



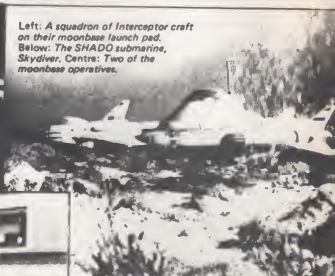
Above Left: The now-famous painting by Cobb from which George Lucas "borrowed" the *Star Wars* scene of the *Millenium Falcon* on the dinosaur. Below left: Ash (Tim Scott) attacks Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) in the confines of the Cobb-designed computer room of the factory ship *Nostramo*. Above Right: An example of Ron Cobb's design for the Twentieth Century-Fox film, *Alien* (1979).

UFO

What prompted Gerry Anderson and his team to tackle a live-action series after the phenomenal success of *Thunderbirds* and the other Supermarionation shows? John Fleming talks to some of the people involved in the series.



Left: A squadron of Interceptor craft on their moonbase launch pad.
Below: The SHADO submarine, Skydiver. Centre: Two of the moonbase operatives.



Live action was something Gerry Anderson Productions had been moving towards, starting with the use of live hands for close ups in their shows, continuing with the introduction of realistically proportioned marionettes in *Captain Scarlet*. This culminated in their series *The Secret Service*, which was basically a puppet show, but with the real Stanley Unwin and a real car used in various real locations for long shots.

I talked to David Lane about the changeover to live-action. He produced both *Joe 90* and *The Secret Service* and

Most people on the Anderson series found puppets a strain.

has been described as the "boy wonder" of the Anderson operation, at one point running the studio while Anderson was busy on feature film work. On *UFO*, Lane scripted and directed several episodes. Like most people involved in the previous productions, he found puppet series a strain: "It was very frustrating working with puppets," he explained to me. "After a while, it really did drive you nuts because they were so restricting. The lip-synch went up the chute, they couldn't smile, they couldn't laugh and they couldn't turn their heads without something going wrong. All the

time, you were working out technically how you could get round the problems of the puppets."

So live actors were, in some ways, easier to work with and humanoid puppets were only used on *UFO* in very rare cases—for example, if someone had to be seen in long-shot, crossing from one model craft to another. There was, of

course, extensive use of modelwork, under the expert supervision of Derek Meddings (see *Starburst* 11 & 12).

The *UFO* storyline was that alien craft were continually trying to sneak up on us unawares and land on Earth for their own nefarious ends. To combat this, the world powers had set up SHADO—Supreme Headquarters, Alien Defence Organisation. The secret HQ was hidden under a bona fide film studio in the English countryside. (Exterior shots were actually of ATV, Elstree and MGM, Elstree) SHADO also had a moonbase with inter-

"How many effects shots can you see before you're bored?"

ceptor craft which could attack the alien UFOs before they entered the Earth's atmosphere. The approaching UFOs were spotted by a sophisticated satellite computer called SID (Space Intruder Detector). If a UFO got near or—disaster—actually into Earth's atmosphere, the Skydiver was used: a submarine with an interceptor attached. This one-man jet fighter could be launched from underwater and could destroy a UFO anywhere in or just above the Earth's atmosphere. If, despite all these precautions, a UFO actually landed, then a SHADO tank-like mobile vehicle would be sent to destroy



Top Left: Paul Roper (George Cole), armed to the teeth, awaits a UFO attack on the moon's surface. Top right: Col Virginia Lake (Winada Ventham) and Commander Straker (Ed Bishop). Above: Straker aboard the submarine Skydiver.



Above: An excellent example of the superb model work of Derek Meddings for UFO.



Above left: Ed Bishop as Commander Straker. Above right: Wanda Ventham as Col Virginia Lake. Below: SHADO's moon base complex.



it. To make many of these models, craft from previous Anderson series were cannibalised and their parts re-used, although this didn't show and the model work was spectacularly successful.

I wondered if maybe the actors and the actresses felt a bit upstaged by all the special effects. David Lane didn't think so: "If you go into the show thinking the special effects are more important than the actors, you're going to end up with a bad show, because it runs out of gas after a while. How many spectacular shots can you look at before you're bored and before they become the norm? The only thing that interests you when you watch a film is the characters: there's nothing else." Indeed this was something that occasionally cropped up in contempor-

had made voice recordings for the puppet series. But, with the exception of the Stanley Unwin sequences in *The Secret Service*, live actors had never appeared in starring roles and live actors' facial expressions had never before been used to further the plot, explain thought processes and make the viewers sympathise with the heroes of the show. So the Anderson personnel were entering a new area in which they had little experience.

David Lane, now a seasoned, highly-experienced director, is able to look back and be honest about what he felt when first faced with the prospect of directing live actors on UFO—"it worried me sick," he says. "It wasn't the first time, because I had directed the artists' recordings for the puppet series. But it's not the same thing at all. One is a voice and the other is a facial thing. It was something very big to move on to and it worried me." Presumably, other members of staff felt the same way.

From a design point of view though, UFO was simpler than the puppet series, because real props could be used. On the puppet films, everything was exactly one-third scale. Everything down to cups, saucers and tea-spoons. As that scale was neither small enough for toy props nor big enough for real props, it meant virtually everything had to be specially made. However, on UFO, a live-action series, Art Director Bob Bell could just go out and buy whatever they needed in a shop.

There was also a change of atmosphere for the production personnel on the series. Although the special effects and the model work were still done at the



Century 21 Studios in Slough, all the live-action interiors were shot at the MGM Studios in Elstree. Keith Wilson (see *Starburst 13*) was one of the designers on UFO and I asked him what it was like.

"It was like a family when I first worked with Gerry," he told me. "It was very close-knit and everyone knew everyone else intimately. When you went into the big bad studios (for UFO) nobody knew you and you knew no one. It was a different world at MGM. We had been allowed to do things at Slough that you weren't allowed to do at a big studio. We had special concessions from the unions

"We had a lot of fun on UFO and enjoyed it."

any reviews of the series: that the production was spectacular but the acting was wooden: like *puppets without strings*.

Lane, like Anderson (see *Starburst 8*), thinks "this was a remark that just had to be made if they couldn't think of anything better to say. It was there to be had for the headline writers. It was easy." But does he think there was any justification? "I think we were slightly wooden with the actors and the characters," he says. "I don't want to be downbeat. We had a lot of fun on it and enjoyed it, but there was a certain justification in the comment." The Anderson team were very experienced in filmmaking techniques and, of course, actors

Left: The occupant of a UFO. Right: A rare example of the use of puppets in UFO. Below left: A SHADO Mobile Unit would tackle any UFO that managed to land on Earth. Below right: One of Keith Wilson's costume designs for the pilots of the Interceptor fighters.



because we were very specialised. But as soon as we started to do something at a major studio, we came under the rules of the unions and things that I had always been used to doing I couldn't do any more. But you soon got used to it. I mean, there were more people to do the job that you'd been doing by yourself, so it didn't delay production at all."

For the central role of the American commander of SHADO, Ed Bishop was chosen. He had appeared in the Anderson's only other foray into live-action, the 1969 feature film *Doppelgänger* (US title: *Journey to the Far Side of the Sun*);

he had been the voice of Captain Blue in the *Captain Scarlet* series; and he had appeared briefly in 2001. For his UFO role his light brown hair was hidden under a tight-fitting platinum blond wig which the ITC publicity blurb described as "of futuristic cut". Up to that time his main claim to fame had been his portrayal of John F. Kennedy in Joan Littlewood's stage production of *Macbeth*, a rather bizarre anti-Vietnam War parabale based on *Macbeth*.

Co-star George Sewell had also been in *Doppelgänger* and had also worked for Joan Littlewood's famous Theatre

Workshop in *Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'Be*, *Sparrows Can't Sing* and *Oh! What a Lovely War*. (He's now best-known for his starring role in TV's *Special Branch*.)

At the time, ITC made the rather dubious claim that UFO had "the largest resident cast ever assembled for a series", adding cautiously "though not all appear in every episode". That last phrase certainly seemed to refer to dancer Peter Gorden, who made his straight-acting debut in UFO as Captain Carlin and who was supposedly going to be one of the lead stars, but who soon dropped from sight.

One person who almost didn't make it into the series at all was Michael Billington, who played the central role of

UFO's ratings were picking up in America before it was axed.

astronaut Paul Foster. He was only offered a screen test when Rose Tobias Shaw, who was casting the show, remembered interviewing him once before, for a small role in a fight scene with Patrick McGeehan for *The Prisoner*. (Shot by UFO's lighting cameraman Brendon Stafford). Of such coincidences and accidents are television shows made.

UFO was well-received in Britain and, ironically, its ratings were picking up in the US when it was axed. That axing was bad news and good news. Coincidences and accidents again. The ending of the show meant a re-development of the proposed second series of UFO—and it finally evolved into *Space 1999*.

John Fleming talks to one of Britain's foremost television writers, creator of the *Quatermass* series...

NIGEL KNEALE

Thomas Nigel Kneale was born in Lancashire by accident, but he's really a Menxman. His father owned a newspaper on the Isle of Man and young Nigel was brought up on the inward-looking island which is a part of, and yet apart from, the rest of Britain. He tried being a lawyer on the island, then went to London's RADA for a couple of years, followed by twelve months in Stratford as an actor. But he decided he was really a writer. He had started writing in his early teens and, in 1950, his book *Tomato Cain and Other Stories* won the Somerset Maugham Award. However it was as a screenwriter that he became famous.

He joined BBC-TV in the early 1950s and worked initially on children's programmes at a time when very little material was specially written for tv. He stayed on at the Corporation for about five years, working in a wide variety of departments — music, documentary, comedy and drama.

His big television breakthrough came in 1953 with a six-part story *The Quatermass Experiment*, which was

filmed by Hammer Films the following year as *The Quatermass Xperiment* (US title: *The Creeping Unknown*). More furore was caused, though, by his BBC adaptation of George Orwell's *1984*, which resulted in an outcry over the horror of the "rat" scene. That was in 1954. He followed it in 1955 by *Quatermass 2*, another six-part serial, filmed by Hammer in 1956 (US title: *Enemy from Space*). Hammer also bought his 1956 television drama *The Creature* to the big screen in 1957 as *The Abominable Snowman*, but it took them until 1967 to film his 1958 tv success *Quatermass and the Pit*.

By the late 1950s, Kneale was identified as a science fiction writer and so it was with relief that he broke this typecasting by writing the film versions of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1959) and *The Entertainer* (1960). He continued to write extensively for both tv and films. His film work, as an adaptor, included *First Men in the Moon* (1964) and *The Devil's Own* (1966) although in neither case did he have any control over the end result. His tv work included *The*

Road (1963), *The Year of the Sex Olympics* (1968), *Wine of India* (1970), and *The Stone Tape* (1972), all for the BBC. In 1973, the BBC planned to make his new story *Quatermass IV*, but the project collapsed. His excellent six-part series *Beasts* was made by ATV in 1976 but the next year the company dropped his 90 minute play about a Manx slave-trader one week before the rehearsals began—because of rapidly escalating scenery costs, of all things.

In 1978, Thames TV resurrected *Quatermass IV* and their film-making subsidiary Euston Films turned it into a £1 million tv series/feature film *The Quatermass Conclusion* (directed by Piers Haggard, a great-grand-nephew of writer Rider Haggard).

Kneale found the name *Quatermass* by glancing through a telephone directory, but that is about the only random factor in the work of a writer whose highly-visual plots and ideas are tightly-controlled, constantly fascinating and always intelligent. Piers Haggard says: "Kneale is the best science fiction writer in Britain".

Starburst: *Rudolph Cartier was your producer on all three BBC Quatermasses and on 1984. How did you meet him?*

Nigel Kneale: Well he moved into the BBC at the same time I did. I realised he was a man who never took no for an answer – which is a great thing. All he needed to know was that it was practically impossible and he'd immediately go off and do it. There was certainly no other director-producer who would ever



have got those Quatermass things on the road.

In those days television was live, wasn't it?

Yes – you had to have film inserts, of course, if you had an exterior scene, like someone walking through a park. The studio we shot that first Quatermass in

"The Quatermass Experiment started as an accident."

was that old one at Alexandra Palace, where the cameras were literally the oldest electronic cameras in the world. They were the ones that were put into commission in 1936.

How did Quatermass start?

It was really an accident. They had a gap in the schedule and somebody said *Oh! you must write something!* So I wrote it as far as I could and it was being trans-

mitted before I'd actually written the end of it. It wasn't a rave success. I dug up old notices recently and they're quite funny because they say *This dreary programme started last night – it's scientifically*



incorrect . . . and so on. Now, of course, it's been transmuted into having been a great success.

You did 1984 after that.

I suppose they felt that, if we'd done one, we could do another. Technically, that was a very difficult one indeed – to get it into a studio live. (The rats were on film.) In a two-hour show like 1984, you would pre-film perhaps a quarter of an hour and the rest would be live, which was very heavy going.

The play caused a furore. Questions in the House of Commons.

Yes! It was a question of lying low after that one. Nothing like it had ever hit television before. They tended to use three-act stage plays and you got little intervals between the acts. Very well done and beautifully acted, but a little bit sedate. What you didn't get was a purely tele-

vision-type narrative, where you intercut in the middle of scenes: the thing that you do in any film script. That was new. And, I suppose, if one started writing in those terms, immediately the thing had far more impact.

You were interested in that technique?

I suppose I'd have liked to write films but, at that time, it was all locked up firmly in a closed shop. I could no more have got a card to write film scripts than



fly. So I stuck to television.

You didn't script the film of The Quatermass Experiment.

No. There was the usual hurried deal by Hammer with some American people and they insisted on having an American actor and an American adaptor. So this chap came over who worked out some non-

"They turned Quatermass into a screaming person."

sense which turned my poor old Quatermass into a screaming, shouting person – probably like the last film producer he'd worked for. I had no control over it all. I still see that thing turn up and I hate it.

You co-scripted Quatermass 2.

Well, there were some changes to the script – cuts – so it came out like it did.

Why the cuts?

The tv version was six half-hour episodes



Top left: The movie version of Quatermass and the Pit (1967). Top centre: Hammer's Quatermass Experiment (1955). Top right: BBC's Year of the Sex Olympics (1968). Above left: Behind the scenes of First men in the Moon (1964). Above: Andre Morell in BBC's Quatermass and the Pit (1959).



Above: Press men gather round a reconstructed ape-man in Hammer's *Quatermass and the Pit* (1967). Below right: Brian Donlevy watches makeup man Phil Leekey touching up Tom Chitto's face in Hammer's *Quatermass 2* (1957).

and they all over-ran by anything up to ten minutes. There was no way they could stop us — except by taking us off the air — because we were live. We knew this and took a chance. When you tried to compress those into a 90-minute film version, a lot had to go and too much went and the substitutions were not very clever. The characters are so cardboard you literally have to strain yourself to tell one from the other. It seems to me to be a lesson in how not to do it.

Quatermass 2 was about the evil of science.

No — not science. I'm not a bit anti-science, only occasionally some scientists. After all, old *Quatermass* himself is one: perhaps a bit more sensitive to his responsibilities than some. And in the new serial his main ally (*Dr Joseph Kapp*) is also a research scientist. Even Kapp's wife is a qualified archaeologist. The whole of the fourth *Quatermass* is about a last-ditch use of logic and dwindling technological resources, pitted against suicidal mysticism.

Quatermass 2 was about the evil of secrecy. It was a time when mysterious establishments were popping up: great radar establishments and nuclear establishments like Harwell and Porton. Down germ warfare. All the *Quatermass* things

have been very much tied to their time. *Quatermass and the Pit* was written at a time when there was a lot of building going on. So I thought, well, you dig down to an enormous depth and find a spaceship. Immediate recognition.

It absolutely terrified me on tv.

Well, we always really aimed at an adult audience for these things. And we hoped that the kiddies would be in bed. It was made very clear that this was not for children.

I don't mind frightening adults. They can take it. But not small children, simply

"I don't mind frightening adults — they can take it."

because they haven't the resources of fact in them to sort out what's real and what's unreal. If a little six year-old is confronted with some nightmare situation, that little creature is at the mercy of all your special effects, because he really hasn't been in the world long enough to know what is real. And if he sees some dreadful thing — an apparition appearing out of the floor — he's not to know that it's been made by Jack Kine and Bernard Wilkie (of BBC Visual Effects). It may really happen to him and it may happen in his bedroom tonight. That's not a thing to play with.

Do you find that Quatermass is an albatross round your neck?

Well, a little bit. It's like an actor being in a series: you get stuck with the image. But I think the worst thing is what people expect things to be. The word "horror". The *Quatermass* were never meant to be "horror" stories. There's more humour than horror in them, I hope — certainly that applies to this new one.

I liked your Beasts stories for ATV.

I liked them very much indeed.

There weren't actually any beasts in them, though.

Nol This was the trick! That you would never see a beast.

The series had very ordinary settings: a supermarket, a living room.

I always feel that the most interesting



"strange" thing has to have an ordinary setting. Once you have *Dracula's Castle*, it's totally dead: you've just brought in a huge, tatty, cobweb-hung cliché. Whereas, if it just happens in somebody's house, in a room like this, then it can be very upsetting indeed.

There was a psychological strangeness in The Road.

Oh it's a favourite of mine. It's only a little play, but it's interesting. It's set in the 18th century, with a group of people doing what they imagine to be a scientific investigation — trying to bring rational minds to bear in *The Age of Reason* on what appears to be a haunting in a wood. Terrible noises are heard, which are extremely upsetting. What they're actually hearing is a motorway in our time, on which a huge traffic jam has occurred, caused by people trying to escape from thermonuclear war. It ends

"They hear terrified voices — people trying to escape."

with a nuclear blast which has actually blown itself back in time to the 18th century and produced a kind of back-reflection, a ripple. So these people have no conception of what they're hearing... The terrified voices on the motorway, people trying to escape... It's all completely recognisable to us: it's all in our terms. But they don't know what it means.



Peter Cushing appeared as Winston Smith in BBC's 1984, pictured here with Andre Morell as O'Brien.

Several projects you've worked on have folded.

Well, one of the first ones was when I was working with Ken Tynan again. We were going to do what would have been the last Ealing film — *Lord of the Flies*. We were going to do that on a big scale, but

"We were going to do *Lord of the Flies* . . ."

Ealing folded up. Then it became a property just lying about and Peter Brook decided to do it his own way and simply stuck to the book. It's a very clever book, but very narrow. It seems to me to emerge as a satire on the public school system. We tried to get away from that and make it into a satire on people in general. I drafted a whole lot of girls into it: this was received with horror. Only

girls — and children who were from a secondary modern school. They weren't all trotting straight out of Westminster (School). I thought, otherwise, what are you saying about the state of humanity? You're saying that children who come from Westminster are innately a bit naughty, that's all. Which seemed not to be sufficient comment on the state of mankind. Nor did it seem (so) to Ken Tynan. So we expanded it, but then there were squawks of horror from other quarters. For me, it worked and still does; it would have been, I think, a much better film.

Another project which folded, of course, was Quatermass IV.

The previous Quatermasses had always rather been attached to their time. So the one in 1973 was to be of an impending



Below: The effects of a horrible accident at the research station in Quatermass 2. Top: The effects technician applies titanium tetrachloride (TTC) to achieve the smoking effect. Bottom: The face of Big Brother from BBC's 1984 (1954).



social disaster, because there were signs of it. Then the oil crisis hit and it would have had even greater relevance. But it didn't get made for a variety of reasons. Including Stonehenge.

That was the one, final, crucial complication. I had lightly written in Stonehenge because my last visit to it had seemed to make it very possible. What I hadn't realised was that, in the interim, it had become Big Business and the place was like a factory with tourists there from dawn to dusk. It was the pride of the Department of the Environment and

"They wouldn't let us go near Stonehenge."

they weren't going to let anyone go near it.

It would have been possible to build a polystyrene Stonehenge.

Well, it would have taken a longer time in planning than we had at our disposal and there were budget problems.

What budget problems?

Well, it would have been very expensive. It really would have been. I can see their problems, having watched Thames go through the same agony.

Was the BBC script the same as the Euston Films script?

No, it's quite a lot different. For one thing, it's now a film version entirely. At



that time, the great problem was to get as much of it as possible into tv studios because, in BBC terms, it's always cheaper. And, of course, it's the sort of story that doesn't go very easily into the studio. It was lying around for a couple of years and Thames expressed interest in doing it and then it was a matter of finding exactly what form it could best be done in. And that was this dual format of a tv four-episodic (*Quatermass*) and a

"I wrote three versions of *Quatermass*."

film (*The Quatermass Conclusion*) made out of the same material — which is very difficult to handle.

What did you think when you first heard the format?

Well, I wasn't crazy about it, because you feel you're either going to pad the long one or murder to short one.

So how did you resolve the problem?

I was very careful not to pad, because I knew that was the obvious thing, but to write in material which can be removed. At a certain point, you can allow it to go in either direction A or direction B. Now, direction A will take you into a kind of loop which brings you back to where it joins direction B and you just exclude the loop. That isn't padding. It's an apparently essential piece of action and it's a perfectly legitimate part of the story, but you can do without it.

You actually wrote two separate scripts?

Yes, but that was only as far as one could guess. Because, as none of it had been shot, one couldn't tell what would actually work out best; some things paid off better than we'd ever thought.

How involved were you?

At that stage, I was busy doing the book version, which is radically different from the film.

The plot's different?

Considerably. In fact, we had three versions on the go — a novel which, I

"The book tries to explain *Quatermass'* family life."

think, will read as though it was the prior piece. The tv version. And finally the cinema version, which is the shortest and meagrest telling of the story. So, trying to juggle these three together could be extremely confusing.

You mentioned earlier that the book is a novel rather than a novelisation.

Well, it was certainly intended to be. Because a novelisation is a cheapie thing of just changing the dialogue and putting "He said" in front of it. Whereas this tries to explain the whole of *Quatermass'* life way back beyond where any of them started. His family life, which we never see anything of in the others.

Did you always have those details in your mind?

No, I think I worked it back logically. What it must have been.

This *Quatermass* sounds more pessimistic

than the others.

Well, I don't think it is really: not by the end. I think it's got quite a lot of balancing material. The people are nice and it's all about the people.

The police are mercenaries.

Well, our police have gone and they've hired very nasty people instead. In the book, I've clarified that — a thing which only began as a hint in the tv version — that they're South African mercenaries. I thought that was the most likely source. I think it's quite probable, by a development of events there that they make it too hot for themselves and they'll be all too ready to offer themselves as a mercenary force.

We have a complete breakdown (in the story) — that all the social services have completely gone and there is no petrol or oil. Everything has stopped. The North

Sea pipelines have simply ceased to exist and there's no fuel coming in. The only thing that survives is a minuscule pre-eminence that everything is normal. For instance, television still exists, broadcasting about two hours a day. They simply put on the last remnants of rubbish to show that everything is normal. Hardly anyone is able to view it because, for one thing, there's hardly any electricity. It's a continual series of power

"In *Quatermass* everybody's too frightened to go out."

cuts and everybody's too frightened to go out, so they sit in their houses hoping that perhaps their television set will come on.

Do you think things are actually going in that rough direction?

Well, don't you think they might? There's every indication of it at the moment.



Left: Richard Wordsworth as the possessed astronaut, *Carroon*, in Hammer's *Quatermass Xperiment*. Above: Ray Harryhausen and the late Les Bowie at work on *First Men in the Moon* (1964). Top: Behind the scenes on *First Men in the Moon*. Above right: Lionel Jeffries has a difference of opinion with the Selenites in *First Men in the Moon*. Below right: Andrew Kier as the bearded *Quatermass* discovers a martian in the spaceship. Hammer's *Quatermass and the Pit* (1967).



So what happens? The end of Western Civilization?

It could very well be. I think there are alternatives. One is that the Arabs simply cut the juice off, knowing what will happen and being prepared to watch it happen. And then there's the question of will we let it happen or do we start bombing the Arabs and take "our" oil back? So then what do we do? Have World War 3? Or a great technological

"An alternative to oil is nuclear power..."

downturn?

Is that what interested you in Quatermass? Seeing the way things are going and taking them to one possible ultimate conclusion?

Yes. The alternatives are fairly horrid. We've put ourselves in hock to a certain type of technology, which is the Oil Technology. Another option is to rapidly develop nuclear power stations. So you've then stuck yourself with a new technology and you're in hock to that. If anything goes wrong with that or (the reactors) all go critical, we're finished and

"... but then you're in hock to that!"

probably dead in the process. So we're worse off.

The only safe thing is to go back to horses and carts with everybody keeping and eating rabbits and having a Stone Age technology. But that's no real solution. We've too many people to feed.

At the time The Year of the Sex

Olympics was screened (1968), you were quoted as saying that, in ten years, television and computers would be taking over people's lives.

Yes, it hasn't moved as fast as that. Maybe it'll be a technological downturn, in fact.



THINGS TO COME

Starburst's ever-popular monthly look at the worlds of tv and cinema science fiction marches on.
Compiled by Tony Crawley.

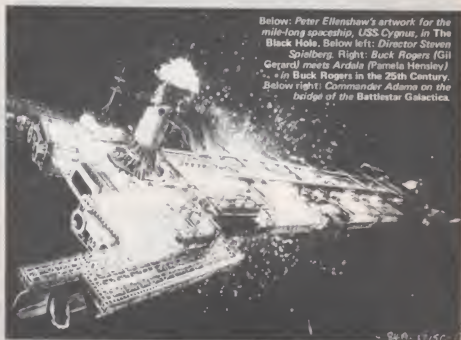
LUCAS SPIELBERG TEAM

Slowly the news of the much-rumoured movie to be made by both George Lucas and Steven Spielberg is being leaked. The project: *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. The writer: Lawrence Kasdan. The facts: Lucasfilms will make the movie, Spielberg will direct, and George's old university chum, Howard Kazanjian will produce.

Scripter Kasdan, a Michigan University graduate, had sold two scripts in Hollywood — *The Bodyguard* and *Continental Divide* — before Lucas hired him to polish the late Leigh Brackett's first draft of *The Empire Strikes Back*.

Little more is known about the project for the moment. Producer Kazanjian and other Lucasfilm personnel describe it simply as an "adventure". But if you think the title is familiar — you'd be right. Larry Kasdan's script is based on a story by George Lucas and his San Francisco pal, Philip Kaufman, re-maker of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Until recently, it was surmised that Kaufman himself would helm the film for the Lucas combine.

Howard Kazanjian is saying even less about another top-secret project he will produce for George. Howard made his debut as a producer on George's *More American Graffiti*, currently being relaunched in America after a dismal start as *After American Graffiti*. He's a graduate of the University of Southern California, from the same year as George, Gary Kurtz and the *Graffiti*-sequel cinematographer Caleb Deschanel. In fact, George wanted Howard as his assistant director on various films, including the mighty *Star Wars*, but he was committed elsewhere. Now he's back firmly in the Lucas camp . . . or ranch. Spielberg is expected to start work on *Raiders of the Lost Ark* by next spring.



Below: Peter Ellenshaw's artwork for the mile-long spaceship, USS Cygnus, in *The Black Hole*. Below left: Director Steven Spielberg. Right: Buck Rogers (Gill Gerard) meets Arda (Pamela Hensley) in Buck Rogers in the 25th Century. Below right: Commander Adams on the bridge of the Battlestar Galactica.

DISNEY'S EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

So many are the dark tales of woe emanating from the Walt Disney empire of late, that *The Black Hole* is beginning to be regarded not as just another multi-million dollar sf movie, but as the Disney studio's desperate 20 million dollar gamble. If the film fails, Disney will go down a black hole of their own making.

Audiences are deserting Disney movies in favour, perhaps, of visits to Disneyland and Disneyworld. Wherever they're going, they're proving family movies are a thing of the past. It's too expensive to take an entire family to the cinema anymore; besides, the youngsters value their independence, quite rightly, and prefer selecting their own film fare. Nine times out of ten that means *Alien*, not *Mary Poppins* or *Herbie*!

Last year, Disney film profits dropped by 9 million dollars, and current output is hardly the cause of queues around the block. The top brass is working overtime in attempting to place an executive finger in the dike, adding more meat to their scripts, hiring bigger name stars. The Disney name, alone, is no longer enough. But trying to entice American audiences in to see *The Spaceman* and *King Arthur* by jazzing up the title to *Unidentified Flying Oddball* has all the expertise of Idi

Amin's telegrams to world leaders. Even poor Mickey Mouse himself, standard-bearer for so long for the Disney folk, has been brought drastically up to date — on a disco album, giving a boogie beat to such standards as "Chim-Chim-Chere" and "Zip-a-Dee-Do-Deh". Donald Duck sings "Macho Duck" on one track and poor Mickey is now studio-hyped as Disney's version of Travolta. There's also a rumour that Disney intend re-making *Snow White* — with seven robot dwarfs!

All of which explains why a further 7 million dollars has been allocated to publicise and promote *The Black Hole*'s opening on no less than 500 cinemas in the States. Disney aim to keep it black — not red. If not, more than a few heads will roll. Cinema production could be heavily curtailed, if not ceased altogether, apart from re-issues of the old animation classics, and shooting tv-movies for *The Wonderful World of Disney*. This is one area where the Disney studio remains king, and also perhaps, why families don't go to pay for their films. The tv show is the oldest prime-time series in America — after 18 uninterrupted years. But even the tv show has been re-titled to Disney's *Wonderful World*.

Meanwhile, there's . . .

TROUBLE AT DISNEY

Another bitter blow for Disney . . . About 17% of its award-winning animation staff have upped stakes, pencils, pens and paint-brushes and quit. They've formed Don Bluth Productions and begun work on a 7-million dollar cartoon feature in tandem with Aurora Productions. And that's a combine set up some time back when three other Disney high-ups exited.

Admitting the timing of the walk-out was bad, Disney's vice-president, Ron Miller, says the exodus means the studio's next big animation offering, *The Fox and the Hound*, can't be ready for Christmas 1980 as planned; more like the summer of '81.

The usual euphemism of "creative differences" was given as the reason for Don Bluth leaving. He took with him six of the studio's 16 animation staff, plus four of their 26 assistants. "Some of them I respect," comments Ron Miller. "Some I wouldn't have back. Some will be back." Brave words.

Don Bluth, however, feels still more Disney staffers will be taking a hike soon, presumably to join his team working on his version of Robert C. O'Brien's award-winning novel, *Mrs Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*.

For the moment, Disney is left with just nine animators, 22 assistants, three effects-animators, 21 "breakdown and in-betweeners", plus four trainees. Ron Miller describes them as "still the creative backbone of the company". What else would he say? After all, no one would want to hint that Disney is a sinking ship. Just lurching a little. Experiencing growing-up pains, after a 50 year adolescence.

A NEW THING

The next most important — and rather sad — news this month is that a new version is being planned of Howard Hawks' 1951 sf classic, *The Thing From Another World*. Wilbur Stark, an American producer resident in London, is behind the venture. He recently obtained re-make rights to more than twenty old RKO movies; Roger Vadim is handling one, for instance, re-treading Val Lewton's *The Cat People*. Now comes the news of the Hawks' re-tallying. Not, I happen to think, good news. And I'm sure John Carpenter and others would agree with me.

New Fox Film

20th Century-Fox's next big sf offering, *Sum VII*, I gather is set in Egypt. Marc Norman is scripting T.W. Harding's best seller for producer Richard A. Roth. His last film was *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes' Smarter Brother*, with Gene Wilder. Here's hoping *Sum VII* will be wilder still.



BIG BUCKS

Glen Larson is going for broke. Again. *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century* is now the most expensive hour tv show mounted in Hollywood. The full budget is 750 thousand dollars per episode. That's a good 30 thousand dollars more a week than top winners like *The Rockford Files*, *Charlie's Angels* or even Larson's *BJ and the Bear* and its off-shoot *The Misadventures of Sheriff Lobo*. In fact, 750 thousand dollars is exactly the same figure as *Battlestar Galactica* cost, which was the eventual undoing of that short-lived item from the same Larson shop.

Buck Rogers would appear to be on safer ground than *Galactica* in the ratings by questionable virtue of its humour, plus the fact that it has a name and a definite hero for viewers to pin their fantasies upon. Gil Gerard continues filling Buck's boots for the NBC-tv format, supported by some of the film team: Erin Gray and Tim O'Connor remain as Wilma Deering and Dr Huer; Felix Silla is still inside robot Twiki's fibreglass suiting — and Mel Blanc continues to supply Twiki's tweakings. Lost in the translation from movie to tv are Pamela Hensley, Henry Silva and Joseph Wiseman. The new and

presumably regular villain is none other than William Conrad, the erstwhile Cannon. That signing could explain the huge budget. Has to be a very large rocket indeed to encompass the girth of Conrad.

MORE TV BUCKS

Second only to *Buck Rogers* in terms of budget is our old Marvel-ious pal, *The Incredible Hulk*, on the rival CBS network. MCA-tv have bowed to the inevitable inflation and upped the green one's expenses from 395 thousand dollars to 550 thousand dollars a throw. The ABC channel's fantasy offering, *Mork and Mindy*, has obtained a similar rise from last season's debuting 190 thousand dollars a show to 250 thousand dollars. *Mork* is now one of no fewer than ten hit shows which Paramount tv produce on a total outlay, per episode, per show or if you prefer it, per week of . . . 2 million 260 thousand dollars. The mind boggles!

GALACTIC EMMYS

Battlestar Galactica picked up two Emmy awards at the 31st annual TV-Oscar ceremonies, hosted by Cheryl Ladd and Henry Winkler (somebody remembers him!) in Hollywood. Understandably, the backroom boys beat the galactic actors to the trophies. Jean Pierre Dorleac picked up the costume design award, and the outstanding individual achievement in creative technical crafts went — where else? — to the show's special effects co-ordinator, John Dykstra, to Richard Edlunds, for his miniature photography, and to Joseph Gross for his mechanical effects. Both Dykstra and Edlunds also won Oscars this year for *Star Wars*.



GALACTIC TRIUMPH

In fact, one wonders why Glen Larson and MCA ever stopped making *Galactica*. The pilot film, released as a movie abroad and later on in America as well, won far better ratings than first imagined among the past year of US tv movies. According to *Variety's* recent listings of some 314 placings, something called *The Dallas Cowboys' Cheerleaders* topped the tv-movies chart, followed in second, third and fourth slot by various episodes of the *Roots* sequel. *Galactica* came in as high as No 13 with a better audience figure than *Gone with the Wind*, the opening new *Roots* chapter, John Carpenter's *Elvis* and Glen Larson's pilot for *BJ and the Bear*. *Mandrake* and *Dr Strange* were way down the chart in 204th and 272nd spots.

MOVIES ON TV

Among the cinema movies transferring to the American tube, *Rocky* topped a league table of some 198 placings. Good to see Brian De Palma's *Carrie* as high as No 6. Sean Connery's *From Russia With Love* drew larger ratings than his *You Only Live Twice* (both films being repeats), beating monster movies like *Orca* and *Grizzly*. Ironically, *Airport '77* (Part Two) did better than Part One (26 and 44), while *King Kong* could only just about make the 76th spot, and then Part One only. Part Two slumped way behind at No 105. As you might recall, both *Airport* and *Kong* featured added footage in order to increase screen times. Didn't seem to help either of them that much. Let that be a lesson to tv companies interfering with movies!

SHRINKING AT LAST!

Lily Tomlin's on-off, on-off role as *The Incredible Shrinking Woman* is actually underway at the Universal studios at last with Joel Schumacher directing. Lily's joined in the cast by Charles Grodin (ex-*King Kong*), Ned Beatty from *Superman* and Henry Gibson from *Nashville*. Henry's so small he could have starred in the original *Incredible Shrinking Man*.

ROMERO BUYS HIS FILM

It's taken quite a few years wrangling, but George Romero's company now owns *Night of the Living Dead* again. In a statement from their New York office, Richard Rubenstein, George's partner and



president of his Laurel Group, says world rights of the cult movie were granted to Laurel by Image Ten, Inc., the last known owners of the film. Romero's company is "now the only authorised source of the film, with the exception of pre-existing licenses granted by the Walter Reade Organisation or Image Ten." So make a note of that, fantasy film conventions. Rubenstein adds that both Laurel and Image Ten intend to take "all appropriate action to protect and enforce their rights in and to the picture." Yeah, make a note of that as well...

QUESTION TIME

When is a pilot tv-film not a pilot tv-film? when it's *Buck Rogers*... It was, of course the two-hour pilot-movie for the series, *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*, which was rush-released to cinemas instead of going on the American tube. Now it's been aired by NBC, heavily hyped as "the theatrical movie that led to the series". I will never understand American television people. They speak a fork-tongued language all of their own.

FLASH QUIZ

Where, some of your letters ask, did Dino De Laurentiis discover his *Flash Gordon* star, Sam Jones? Would you believe when he was appearing on the US-tv game show, *The Dating Game*. Out-of-work actors should not, therefore, turn down the opportunity of appearing on *The Generation Game* with their mums from hereon...

ALIENATED

Far, far from all the *Alien* hype, Nostromo skipper Tom Skerritt is filming in the northern wilderness of Canada, up beyond Alberta. His new movie is *Silence of the North*, an 8-million dollar reconstruction of the true-life adventure of Olive Fredrickson, a widow stranded with her three children in the northern wastes at the turn of the century. Ellen Burstyn plays Olive. Cold as it is up there, Tom fared better than *Sigourney Weaver* when she flew into Spain for the San Sebastian film festival. Nobody met her at the airport. Nobody seemed to know who she was. The price of fame, baby.



FIVE STAR DELAY

Yes, there *is* a financial hold-up on Gerry Anderson's 12-million dollar movie project, *Five Star Five*. No, the film is *not* dead; planning and pre-production is in progress. Gerry, himself, insists the film has fundamental differences to any or all other sf films of the hour. But they all say that...

He sees his script, written with Tony Barwick, as a *Where Eagles Dare* in space, hopefully minus Richard Burton, "crammed with design and effects all right, but no matter how good special effects are, it's the people who ultimately count." (Good, definitely not Richard Burton then!) For the moment, he's not saying much more. He's not naming his British director, or who his co-producer Sydney Rose has been star-shopping for in Hollywood. Three stars only, despite the title. The other two are a robot and "a machine". Hmm.

LIGHT SHOW

Stanley Kubrick's special lighting genius from Barry Lyndon, Brian Ferran, is working on new lighting effects for Ken Russell's *Altered States* in Hollywood. His work will also include computerised mattes. Head man for the film's overall effects is Chuck Gaspar, late of John Boorman's *The Heretic*.

TARZOON SOON?

Five years later and it looks like we'll be seeing the Franco-Belgian animation send-up of Tarzan after all. Made in London and Brussels as *Tarzoan*, *Shame of the Jungle*, and unveiled in the form of a 15-minute pilot version at the Cannes festival of 1974, the complete 80-minute satire opened in Paris in 1975, had healthy releases in Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, Holland, West Germany, Portugal, Greece, Italy and Israel — and then ran foul of legal action from the estate of Tarzan's creator, the late Edgar Rice Burroughs. The litigation is now over, the name *Tarzoan* has been dropped from the title at least, and *Shame of the Jungle* is ready for the off again. Ironically, the delay should help it both in America and Britain. The only voice-over that any publicity could be attached to five years ago was that of Johnny Weismuller Jr as Tarzoan — his father suggested him for the job. All other voices were by a bunch of unknowns, most of whom had connections with *National Lampoon*, one of the

many magazines Tarzoan's creator, artist and director, Picha, worked for. Many are big names today — especially John Belushi and Bill Murray.

Picha himself, the Brussels-born Jean-Paul Walravens, 37, has been a successful cartoonist since 1964. He's made cartoons for Belgium television, published five books of his work, and made his first movie, *Cartoon Circus* in 1972, which was a prizewinner at the Deurne festival. He's worked in commercials, newspapers, magazines, posters and advertising — even compiled an illustrated guide to Brussels.

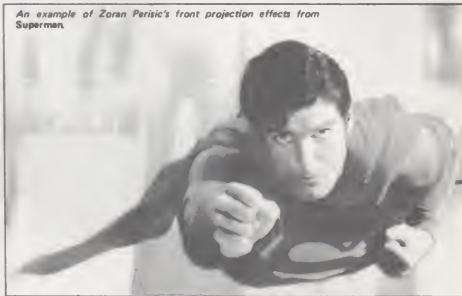
"The idea of making a film — a real film rather than a short had been in my mind for years," says Picha. "I first toyed with the idea of using the New Testament, but before I got around to it everyone else had — *Godspell*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*." (And now *Monty Python's Life of Brian*). "I was obsessed by several things — the army, ecological problems and so on, and by choosing *Tarzoan*, I got it out of my system."

By January, 1976, however, the Bur-

roughs estate intervened, yelling plagiarism. Picha's co-director, Boris Szulzinger, also from Belgium, led the fight. "We say that our production is an original work in which there are elements of parody, but that we did not use the Tarzan myth to make our film. Picha's creations are sufficiently rich to prove that he has no need to steal other people's ideas."

And so, finally, *Tarzoan* has triumphed. "As I knew he would," says Picha. It's the sort of humour people need today. It's very necessary to take the mickey — to bowl over ready-made ideas. A lot of people are frustrated because they don't care to do so. "Hopefully, 20th Century-Fox, which has had *Shame of the Jungle* on its Soho Square shelves since 1975, will now let it out... It deserves to be seen. But it makes Robert Towne's task of filming the definitive Tarzan film, *Greystoke*, far more difficult. One view of Picha's ape-man — a less than heroic or indeed physical fellow — and you can never take Tarzan seriously again.

An example of Zoran Perisic's front projection effects from *Superman*.



MEET: THE KILLER

Video-recorders are a blossoming business on all sides of the Atlantic, and pretty nifty most of them are. You can record your favourite tv shows, or better still, movies — and you can do this when you're out for the evening, or even at home while watching another channel. But all videos lack one vital additive. So a Connecticut firm has invented it. They call it *The Killer*. It's a small box you plug into your video and it will automatically pause when commercials come on. So far, you can only use it while taping black and white films. What a great idea!

\$6M CONSPIRACY

Intriguing partnership. London's Courier Films will produce Martin Caiden's *The Mendelov Conspiracy* in London early next year. Courier is the company of one Zoran Perisic. He supplied the special effects in *Superman*. Author Martin Caiden wrote the books which led to the genesis of *The Six Million Dollar Man*. Their *Mendelov* film can't start until Zoran has completed his effects for *Superman 2*. Caiden's book was first published ten years ago and was released later as a paper-back in America as *Encounter Three*, since when it's reverted to its original title. For obvious reasons.

The Black H

With the science fiction wave showing no signs of ebbing, more and more major film studios are entering the sf stakes. Due from Paramount around Christmas is *Star Trek—The Motion Picture*. And from Twentieth Century-Fox in May 1980, *The Empire Strikes Back*. But before either of those films reaches our cinemas Walt Disney plans to release a major contribution to space fantasy motion pictures, *The Black Hole*. Starburst presents a special preview by Alan Murdoch.



Above: A group of fearsome cyborg creatures. Below: Some of the human roles: stars of the film, including Yvette Mimieux, Joseph Bottoms, Robert Forster, Anthony Perkins and Ernest Borgnine.



ole

After fifty years in the business of producing fantasy films, Walt Disney has finally turned its attention to serious science fiction. Five years in the making and costing 10 million dollars,

The Black Hole is the most ambitious and expensive project to come from the company.

The story line is classified information with only those immediately involved in the production having access to the scripts. Even so, the ending of the film

The effects were achieved by working double shifts.

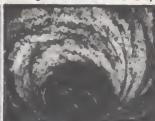
has been kept from every one except the director and the producer/Executive Vice President, Ron Miller.

"This is no gimmick," states Miller. "It is our aim to ensure that the film, together with its contents, does not become too familiar to audiences prior to its release." However, it is more likely that the real reason for the secrecy is to prevent a smaller tv movie production

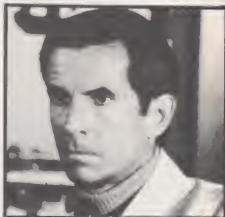
company stealing the idea and showing the result on television before the Disney epic opens.

To ensure that the special effects are as impressive as one would expect from Disney, the Studio has developed an advanced form of the Dykstraflex system that was used for Star Wars. Called ACES (Automated Camera Effects System) it is a sophisticated, computer-activated photography set-up.

"The aim has been that of achieving the ultimate realism of objects moving in space," says Miller, "a factor that other films using lesser equipment have not



Below: A band of warrior robots advance menacingly. Far right top: Anthony Perkins as Dr Alex Durant. Far right centre: Another of the robot warriors. Far right below: Ernest Borgnine as journalist Harry Booth.





Above: Maximilian Schell as Dr. Hans Reinhardt. Below: Yvette Mimieux as Dr. Kate McCray.
Bottom: A tense scene aboard the starship *Cygnus*. Right: The evil robot Max looms above Robert Forster.



1903 c. - 16



always been able to master."

Assembling a team of master technicians, including Eustace Lycett, Peter Ellenshaw (who also executed the brilliant production paintings for the film) and Art Cruikshank, head of the Disney matte department Harrison Ellenshaw (son of Peter) has used an unprecedented

The ending of the film has been kept from every one.

total of 154 matte shots to create the special effects in *The Black Hole*. (Harrison Ellenshaw used a mere 13 matte shots for *Star Wars*!) The effects were achieved by having two camera crews and three artists working double shifts on a daily basis. This amounts to twice the work involved in both *Mary Poppins* and *Island at the Top of the World* put together!

It is the special effects that are respon-



Top: The starship that hovers near the Black Hole. Above: A group of visitors travel the length of the ship. Left: Peter Ellenshaw designer of the space ship for the film. Below: A group of evil drone robots. Right: A strange cyborg, half human, half robot.



sible for another Disney first. "The special effects are so realistic," says Ron Miller, "that small children may need a parental hand to hold to reassure them they are in no personal danger." It seems very likely that the film will receive an "A" certificate from the British Board of Film Censors.

The cast will include Maximilian Schell as the captain of the starship that has been stationary in space just outside the range of the Black Hole of the title. Co-starring with Schell are such notable actors as Ernest Borgnine who plays the hard-bitten journalist Harry Booth, and Anthony Perkins (of *Psycho* fame) who portrays astrophysicist Dr Alex Durant. The cast also includes Yvette Mimieux (whose last science fiction outing was *The*

The evil robot appears suitably menacing.

Time Machine for George Pal) as astrophysicist Dr Kate McCray, plus relative newcomers Robert Forster and Joseph Bottoms.

The *Black Hole* will feature several robots. And it is here that the film might fall down. While the evil robot servant of Maximilian Schell (coincidentally also called Maximilian) appears suitably menacing and robotic, the good guys' robots look like they would be more at home in a Donald Duck cartoon than a serious space epic. But perhaps it would be best to reserve judgement until the film opens.

The *Black Hole* has its world premiere in London on 18th December this year, poetic justice, in a way, after such movies as *Alien* and *Star Wars* (both shot chiefly in Britain) opened in the United States first.



A JOURNEY THAT BEGINS V



WHERE EVERYTHING ENDS

THE BLACK HOLE



THE BLACK HOLE starring MAXIMILIAN SCHELL, ANTHONY PERKINS, ROBERT FORSTER, JOSEPH BOTTOMS and YVETTE MIMIEUX and ERNEST BORGNINE.

Music composed and conducted by JOHN BARRY. Production Designed by PETER ELLENSHAW. Director of Photography FRANK PHILLIPS, A.S.C.

Story by JEB ROSEBROOK and BOB BARBASH & RICHARD LANDAU. Screenplay by JEB ROSEBROOK and GERRY DAY. Produced by RON MILLER.

Directed by GARY NELSON. A Walt Disney Production. Technicolor (© "Technovision").

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PLANET OF THE APES



ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR AND SUCCESSFUL FANTASY MOVIES OF THE 1960s ENDED UP AS A FIVE-PART SERIES, 13-EPISEODE TV SHOW AND AN EVEN SHORTER ANIMATED KIDDIE TV SERIES — A SAD FINALE TO A BRILLIANT CONCEPT. PHIL EDWARDS TAKES A LOOK BACK AT WHAT ALL THE FUSS WAS ABOUT.

In 1968, Warner/Seven Arts sold the film rights to Pierre Boulle's novel, *Monkey Planet*, to Twentieth Century-Fox, because the proposed production budget ran to a staggering twelve million dollars. Warner/Seven Arts had optioned the film rights from the three-man team of producer Arthur P. Jacobs, screenwriter Rod Serling and director Blake Edwards. Fox were keen to acquire a major science fiction property to follow the success of their *Fantastic Voyage*, released the previous year. The resulting film, *Planet of the Apes*, netted fifteen million dollars in American and Canadian first-run rentals and went on to spawn four sequels, a spin-off television series, a cartoon series and a whole host of merchandised items from comic books to ape masks, toys and games.

After Fox took on the project (and producer Jacobs) they hired Michael Wilson to work on Serling's script in an effort to bring the lavish budget down to more realistic proportions. No longer did the Apes wear suits, drive cars or hang

A group of Astronauts land on a world where Apes hunt humans.

out in Simian night-clubs. They became an odd mixture of futuristic medical experimenters, carrying out lobotomies and vivisection on the less-intelligent humans, though they lived in cave-like houses, rode horses and used primitive rifles. By altering the depiction of the Ape society, the producer was able to budget the film at the more realistic figure of five million dollars.

Briefly, the first *Planet of the Apes* film tells the story of four astronauts, three men and one woman, who crash-land their space ship on a hostile planet. The woman dies on impact, her suspended animation chamber breaking open too soon, causing her to age to a wizened mummy in a matter of seconds. The three men escape from the ship only to discover that they have landed on a world where the advanced Apes hunt humans, who are a lower, non-lingual form of life, as vermin. The astronauts become the quarry of these terrible huntsmen. One of them is killed outright, the other two are captured and one of these, Taylor (*Charlton Heston*) is singled out by two Ape scientists, Dr Zira and Cornelius (*Kim Hunter* and *Roddy McDowell*) for medical experimentation.

But Taylor soon escapes, taking with him a female human, Nova (*Linda*

Top: A cover painting from Marvel's *Planet of the Apes* comic. Above: A dramatic scene from *Battle for the Planet of the Apes*.



Harrison). They head towards the Forbidden Zone, pursued by Dr Zaius (Maurice Evans), the head of the organutan scientist class, and Zira and Cornelius. It is here on a desolate beach that Taylor learns the secret of the Planet of the Apes. Half-buried in the sand is the remains of the Statue of Liberty — Taylor's ship has flown through a time gate and, in one of the most potent images in all science fiction cinema, is presented with the future of Earth.

Jacob's choice of director, Franklyn J. Schaffner, proved a wise one. Schaffner is best known for his big budget features like Patton, Papillon and the recently-released (though less-than-successful) Boys from Brazil. Schaffner brought a rare dignity to the film, extracting strong performances from his actors, as well as keeping the special effects in control and to a minimum.

The Ape village was constructed inexpensively in what was then a relatively new process, sculpted from quick-drying polyurethane foam sprayed onto wire frames from a compressed air gun. The substance, though much stronger than either plastic or papier mache, is ex-

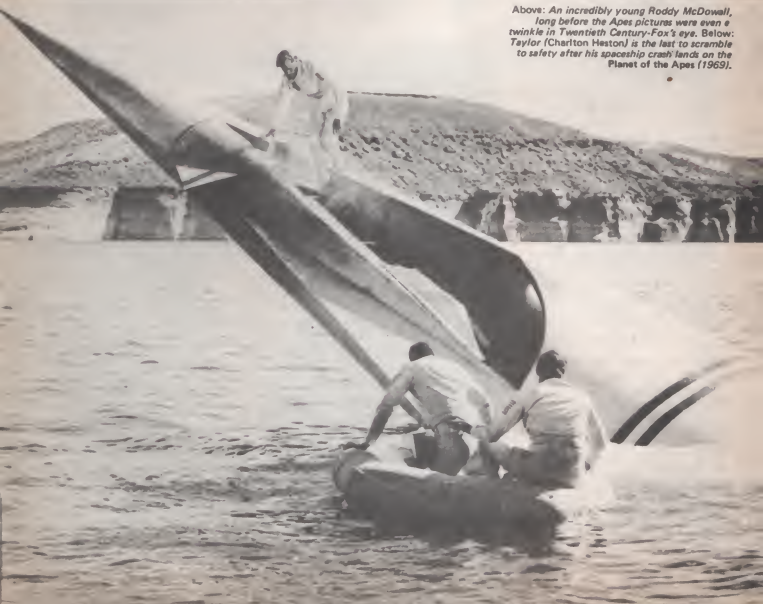


remely light.

Perhaps the most famous single element of Planet of the Apes is the Academy Award winning makeup design of John Chambers, reputed to have cost almost one million dollars of the film's budget. It was vital that the Ape makeup be completely believable as it was on screen almost constantly, often in close-ups. Chambers experimented, developing a blend of latex and porous paint which allowed the actors' skin to breathe. In the early stages of production, the makeup took six hours to apply by a team of artists trained by Chambers. Further refinements allowed the time to be reduced to around three and a half hours.

The film was beautifully photographed by Academy Award winner, Leon Shamroy, and the special opticals, most notably employed in the closing Statue of Liberty scene, were created by L. B. Abbott, Arthur Cruikshank (who worked on Disney's The Black Hole) and Emil Kosa Jr.

Planet of the Apes (1968) only scratched the surface of Ape society, the structure of which would be further developed in the sequels. The military are



Above: An incredibly young Roddy McDowall, long before the Apes pictures were even a twinkle in Twentieth Century-Fox's eye. Below: Taylor (Charlton Heston) is the last to scramble to safety after his spaceship crash lands on the Planet of the Apes (1969).

gorillas, the top scientists are orangutans and the rest of the group are chimpanzees. The society is ruled by a council of elder representatives from each group, though as later films would show, the gorillas would appear to be the most powerful group.

The movie is marred only by a couple of cheap gags. One has three orangutans striking the "hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil" pose. This was shot by Schaffner as a joke to be included in the daily "rushes" and no more. However, Fox executives were so struck by the image of the scene that they demanded it be left in the final cut. Another has Zira saying, quite seriously, "Human see, human do!" to the imprisoned Taylor.

***Planet of the Apes* opened to lukewarm reviews.**

Completed after fifty-nine days of shooting, *Planet of the Apes* opened to lukewarm reviews by the critics, but ecstatic praise from the public.

With this smash hit on their hands, it was only natural that Fox should plan a sequel. *Beneath the Planet of the Apes* (1970), went into production the following year, scripted by ex-film critic Paul Dehn. Dehn was instructed to wrap up the saga with this film as Fox planned only this one sequel. Dehn and his co-writer Mort Abrahams turned in a script with one of the most down-beat endings ever accorded to a major motion picture.

Beneath the Planet of the Apes opens with Taylor and Nova riding into the Forbidden Zone, repeated from the previous film. As they ride they are confronted by a wall of flame, which vanishes as quickly as it appears. As Taylor dismounts and walks towards the place where it had been he disappears completely. And simultaneously another spaceship crashes. Out of it crawls Brent (*James Franciscus*), the only survivor of a

Roddy McDowall was unavailable for the second apes film.

rescue mission sent after Taylor. He is found by Nova and the two of them head back towards Ape City, where they meet up with Zira. (Unfortunately, Roddy McDowall was unavailable for this picture and the Cornelius character was wisely omitted).

Brent and Nova set off for the Forbidden Zone again in search of Taylor, pursued by Dr Zaius and Ursus (*James Gregory*), the general of the Ape army. It is Ursus' hope to finally disprove the rumour that humans had once ruled his planet.

Brent and Nova discover an entrance leading underground to the ruins of New York's Grand Central Station—a beautiful matte painting by L. B. Abbott. Without warning Brent becomes possessed and attacks Nova, almost killing her. They are intercepted by several humans and taken





Top left: In a scene from the tv series *Planet of the Apes*, *Urko* (Mark Lenard), *Galen* (Roddy McDowall), *Virdon* (Ron Harper) and *Burke* (James Naughton, lying down) set up *The Trap*. From the episode of the same name. Top right: In *Escape from the Planet of the Apes*, *Milo* (Sal Mineo), *Zira* (Kim Hunter) and *Cornelius* (Roddy McDowall) arrive on *Earth* in the 20th century. Left: *Caesar* (Roddy McDowall) leads an armed uprising in *Conquest of the Planet of the Apes*.

to the subterranean lair of the mutant survivors of the Third World War. These human mutants appear normal, although their main form of communication is telepathy.

Brent is locked up with the already imprisoned Taylor and, controlled by the mutants, the two are made to fight in a violent and bloody confrontation. Managing to break the control they escape to witness a macabre sight. The mutants are praying to the last remaining atomic bomb, intoning a weird litany that culminates with them peeling off their human masks and revealing their horrific, atomically-scarred faces. Suddenly the apes arrive on the scene and an all-out battle ensues. Nova and Brent are killed

***Beneath the Planet of the Apes* was a fast, tough film.**

and Taylor, his stomach shot out, reaches the controls and detonates the bomb, finally obliterating the planet.

Beneath the Planet of the Apes, like its forerunner, was accorded high production values, and was directed in a fast, tough style by Ted Post. Once again, John Chambers supervised the makeup, also designing the post-nuclear mutants' makeup.

Post married his film to the ending of *Planet of the Apes* so seamlessly that the two movies can be run one after the other as a three hour feature with no appreciable jump.

With *Planet of the Apes* continuing to reap in the profits world-wide and its sequel also making the cash registers overflow, Fox realised they had made a mistake in asking writer Paul Dehn to terminate the series. They hired him once again to script a third film. The result was *Escape from the Planet of the Apes* (1971), considered by many to be the best of the series.

The film opens with a panic stricken

The third Apes film contains many comic scenes.

Zira and Cornelius aware that when it becomes known that Earth was once ruled by humans Ape society will crumble. Finding Brent's crashed spaceship they repair it and escape with another ape, Milo (*Sal Mineo*), into space and time and find themselves in California of 1974. The government is astonished that apes have returned in place of the astronauts.

After Milo is killed by a gorilla, it is discovered that Zira is pregnant. The world becomes enamoured of the talking intelligent apes and they are accepted into the highest circles. This gives director Don Taylor and writer Dehn a chance for some truly comic sequences, played brilliantly by Kim Hunter and Roddy McDowall. However it isn't long before the government begins to worry about the future of the world, realising that they have a chance to change the future

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by destroying the two apes.

In a terrifying scene, Zira and Cornelius are mercilessly hunted down and killed. Zira's newborn son is also apparently killed but in an epilogue we see that she has substituted an ordinary baby chip for her child and the real baby is in the care of circus owner Armado (*Ricardo Montalban*). The film closes with the baby chimp, cradled in Armado's arms crying "Mama, mama".

Don Taylor plays the film as an allegory and apart from the tragic ending,

Conquest was originally planned as the last Apes film in the series.

the feature has a beautifully judged tone of satirical whimsy.

Once again, the Apes were a box-office success. The first film was reissued to another generation of viewers. Fox realised that the demand for further adventures had only marginally diminished and that there was still considerable box-office mileage in the Apes concept. Dehn was asked to write another movie, this time tying up as much of the mythology as possible which had started in the first three films.

Conquest of the Planet of the Apes (1972), directed by Englishman J. Lee



Above: *McDowell enjoys a cigarette. Below: a group of militant gorillas voice their opinions in **Battle for the Planet of the Apes** (1968)*





Above: The Council of Elders sit in judgement of Taylor (Charlton Heston) in *Planet of the Apes* (1968). Below: Maurice Evans is made up for his role as Dr Zaius in the first film of the series, *Planet of the Apes*. Bottom: A group of Apes seem puzzled by some high-powered reading material. *Battle for the Planet of the Apes* (1973).



Thompson (Cape Fear, *Guns of Navarone* etc), is the most violent of the Apes series. It is also the most uncompromising in its presentation of a future world, ruled by a ruthless dictator, Governor Breck (*Don Murray*). Breck's world is a police state, twenty years on from *Escape from Planet of the Apes*. He fears that the child of the talking apes still lives and is not reassured by the disease that has spread through the world, killing off all

***Conquest* tried to put across an allegorical message.**

domestic pets. Humans demanding animal company turn to apes, first as pets, then as slaves. Apes are conditioned with fire and electricity to be completely compliant to their human masters. But society is disrupted when a revolution is instigated by Caesar (*Roddy McDowall* again), the son of Cornelius and Zira, who has been brought to the city by Armado.

The film seemed to be trying to put across an allegorical racial message, but somewhere along the line the message

became garbled and is hardly apparent.

By the time of *Conquest*, John Chambers acted only in an advisory capacity on the film, the actual makeup being supervised by Donald Striepeke who had worked as Chambers' assistant on *Escape*.

Young jazz musician Tom Scott, best known for his work with singer Joni Mitchell and as composer of the original theme for the tv series *Starsky and Hutch* turned in an appropriately discordant score, which further added to the violent mood of the film.

Box office returns were down on this film. The public appeared to be tiring of the concept. But even though the take was less, Fox still felt that they could squeeze one more feature from the formula and bring the story the full

***Battle* brought the series the full circle.**

circle to the beginning of the first feature of the series.

Battle for the Planet of the Apes, made in 1973 and written by John William Corrington and Joyce Hooper Corrington, was also directed by J. Lee Thompson. It tells the story of the world following a nuclear holocaust, a result of a war between apes and humans. The world is divided into three factions: the peaceful chimps, led by Caesar, the militant gorillas, led by Aldo (*Claude Atkins*) and the mutant humans who live in the ruins of civilisation, which presumably became the Forbidden Zone as the years passed. Aldo allies himself with the leader of the mutants, Kolp (*Severan Darden*), in an all-out attack on Ape City. Like the earlier Thompson film, *Battle* is strong on physical violence, though by this time the series was



Right: An extra poses for a test photo of the makeup and costume for the gorillas in *Planet of the Apes* (1968). Below: Taylor (Charlton Heston) in a scene from the second film of the series *Beneath the Planet of the Apes* (1970).



considered to be aimed more towards the young market. Once again it seemed the movie was trying to impart some kind of message, although with the confused and confusing plot it is difficult to understand what the message was.

The *Monthly Film Bulletin* perhaps summed up the film best when it described the political content: "Some-

The sets and masks from the films were used in the tv series.

where beneath the routine action and adventure, a small voice still appears to be whispering something about present-day racial intolerance, although the juxtaposition of black and white humans with good chimpanzees and bad gorillas ensures that the message is muffled."

Fox tried to get yet more mileage from the sets and masks by using them in a thirteen episode television series in 1974. Even more than the final films in the series, it was aimed at a pre-teen market and as is so often the case with children's shows, the producers underestimated the intelligence of their audience.

Following the demise of the television

The cartoon series died a well-deserved death.

series, a limited animation version of the idea was produced, only to die a well-deserved death within a few episodes.

Despite the somewhat sad end of the Apes series, the five feature films remain unique in film history. They presented a consistently high record of production values—technical credits almost always being of the highest order. And through screenings on British television, the *Saga of the Planet of the Apes* is being introduced to a whole new generation of Apes fans.



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STARBURST LETTERS

I hate to say this but I think you have been sucked in pretty badly — I refer to your *Infinity* article (Starburst 8). I can't myself rule out its existence, but the whole article sounds suspicious. I keep a close track of sf/horror films, new and old, and this is the first I have ever heard of these films, producers and stars. I think you should know that James Blacksmith was the title character, a young aboriginal, in an Australian film, *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith*, concerning the apparent rampage and axe-murders upon which he embarked (or a real-life facsimile thereof) last century.

60 Million Miles to Woomeera? Is Alan Murdoch serious? Take a look at that still again! Aussie readers will know that the Ansett Airlines company hasn't gone by as Ansett-ANA for more than a decade now! And Melbourne Airport was transferred to a new locale from that shown quite a while back too. In fact, the whole set-up shown looks pretty sloppy. The little figures are way out of proportion. So find out for sure, eh? Because you've really got me in! Is it a joke article or what?

Keep up the good work (and distribution — magazines here have a habit of vanishing at the whims of the importers after only a few issues).

Stephen McCredie, Melbourne, Australia.

In reference to Starburst 8 your "exclusive feature" entitled "Infinity" has to be the best concocted piece of film science fiction reporting I have had the pleasure to come across.

At this stage in time many relatively young sci-fi orientated magazines are on the world market, all full of science fiction film facts. On several occasions it has crossed my mind as to the validity of some of their reported statements, i.e. "New turbo-charged Wanko camera can out-perform Dykstraflex", or "Superman 1 budget now at 80-million dollars". I usually put these "facts" down as coming from an over zealous publicity department.

Your *Infinity* article takes the Golden Goose award, because as far as I can ascertain not one fact mentioned in the three pages has one scrap of truth to it. Correction, one statement may be true, the writer's name Alan Murdoch, but if I were in his boots I would quickly use an alias for fear of total embarrassment.

As for the aboriginal director, James Blacksmith, he simply does not exist, but an internationally released Australian film, *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*,

concerning the plight of an aboriginal, does. Surely more than just a coincidence?

Night of the Wallaby, Cult of the Blue Boomerang and Sixty Million Miles to Woomeera are all totally fictitious!

I suppose with so many magazines craving for new, up-to-date film information to fill their pages one of them had to fall for such a gag, it seems that Starburst has taken the bait!!

Dennis Nicholson, Melbourne, Australia.

I wish to draw your attention to the article in your magazine *Exclusive — Infinity* by Alan Murdoch in number 8 of Starburst.

This article is, we believe, entirely bogus. The films mentioned, we believe, do not exist and we know that the so-called still taken in front of the Ansett Air Terminal in Melbourne, was taken by a friend of mine, Mr Jack Keating in about 1956.

He took the photograph as a close-up project, having built the model himself. A copy of the photograph was sold to Ansett for publicity purposes.

I realise that you may not have accepted this article knowingly, but I consider it a pretty poor show that made-up information regarding films that I strongly expect do not exist, should appear in print.

Many people reading your publication will accept the information as fact. Others will inadvertently carry on the hoax by including the details of Mr Blacksmith's films in other publications. To look at the somewhat humorous side of it, many fantasy film buffs will just about go insane trying to trace the films mentioned and get more information on them.

I personally believe that you should check the facts on this article and reprint a retraction. It may be partially true, but I have very grave doubts. Relatively speaking, it does not seem a matter of Earth-shaking importance, but many people involved in the field I am sure would be very annoyed to know that articles like this appear in print.

I am the owner/manager of Space Age Books, and have been interested in science fiction and cinema for many years. Both professionally and from a personal standing, I am strongly associated with publishing and the film industry. I will be one of the Australian delegates at the World Science Fiction Convention in Brighton next month. I

know John Baxter and John Brosnan personally, both of whom you have on your writer's list. I have added this personal note just to assure you that I am in a situation to know what I am talking about.

M.R. Binns, Melbourne, Australia.

I would like to know the name of the person who gave you the photos used in the article you wrote in the issue No 8, pages 18-20, which are listed as stills from a film, **60 Million Miles to Woomeera**, which, in the knowledge of a friend of mine, Mr Mervyn Binns — who will visit your office during the World Sci-Fi Convention — has not been shown generally in the capital cities here.

The reason for these enquiries is that the spaceship shown was made by me, for use in a poster, as an entry in a competition run by the Melbourne Camera Club, when I was a member; the shots were taken at the old Melbourne Airport at Essendon in 1953, with the permission of the publicity manager of the airline shown in the background, which had just been formed; Mr Reg Ansett had just taken over ANA, and I had an idea for a publicity shot for them; as well as the poster.

The model was about 18" high, and the figures 2½", and were taken on the concrete in front of the hangar, with the camera—an Exacta 6x6 single lens reflex—placed on the ground, and me lying on my stomach, much to the interest of the ground staff; they are 2 of 8 taken at that time, the negatives of which never left my possession until I burned them some years later; only two prints ever left my possession, the first went to Ansett-ANA and the other to Merv Binns, from which he cut the ship and used it in a montage cover for several copies of our magazine *Ether line* which was published by the Melbourne Science Fiction Club for some years, and to which I contributed, as a magazine reviewer.

J.E. Keating, West Brunswick, Australia.

We passed these letters on to well-known Australian author and contributor to Starburst, Mr John Baxter, who coincidentally supplied the pictures for the Infinity article. After reading them he commented simply: "Who says we Australians haven't got a sense of humour?"

Of course most of our readers realised straight away that the article appeared in the April issue of the magazine and in fact many joined in the joke. ●

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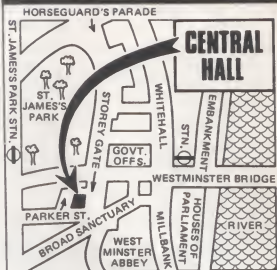
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KRONOS

Not all the good science fiction films of the 1950s had huge budgets and big name directors. One sf movie of twenty two years ago was written by *Forbidden Planet's* Irving Block and starred *This Island Earth's* Jeff Morrow.



Alien trying to kill Vera (Barbara Lawrence) Overlaid (John Emery) attacks Doctor Les Gaskell (Jeff Morrow).

KRONOS

Starring
JEFF MORROW BARBARA LAWRENCE JOHN EMERY
Produced and Directed by RUST NEUMANN
Screenplay by LAWRENCE LOUIS GOODMAN
A Regal Films, Inc. Production Released by 10th Century-Fox

In 1956 during the boom of sf movies, a group of very talented film-makers teamed up to produce a science fiction film about a gigantic robot called *Kronos Conqueror of the Universe*. The film was later released in 1957 under the shorter title, *Kronos*. The same year some excellent sf fantasy offerings were unleashed on cinema audiences including *The Incredible Shrinking Man* and Ray Harryhausen's *Twenty Million Miles to Earth*. Certainly for its atmospheric visuals, *Kronos* ranks alongside these milestones of sf cinema.

The film opens with a comet-like ball of light hurtling through space. Suddenly a much smaller pinpoint of light breaks away from the comet and enters the

Earth's atmosphere. It swoops down across the barren American desert. At that moment a truck approaches along a nearby highway. Without warning the engine cuts out and an eerie whining rises to a crescendo. The driver swerves over to the side of the road and climbs out oblivious to the strange blob of light drifting towards his truck. Suddenly a blinding light explodes in the startled man's face. The engine immediately bursts into life. The driver climbs aboard and, turning his truck around, heads back the way he came.

Forcing his way into Lab Central — a large American observatory — by knocking the security guard at the gate unconscious, the expressionless driver heads for

the office of Dr Eliot (*John Emery*). As the surprised scientist questions the mysterious invader, the blob of alien light hurtles out of the truck driver into the face of Dr Eliot. At that moment the stranger collapses and dies. Eliot seems unperturbed as the recovered security guard drags the body away.

In another part of Lab Central, Dr Les Gaskell (*Jeff Morrow*), his fiancée Vera (*Barbara Lawrence*) and Professor Culver (*George O'Hanlan*) are investigating the appearance in space of the giant ball of light. Referring to the object as an asteroid, M37, they are all surprised to witness the strange ball of light alter its flight path in such a way as to endanger Earth. Not realising that Dr Eliot is now

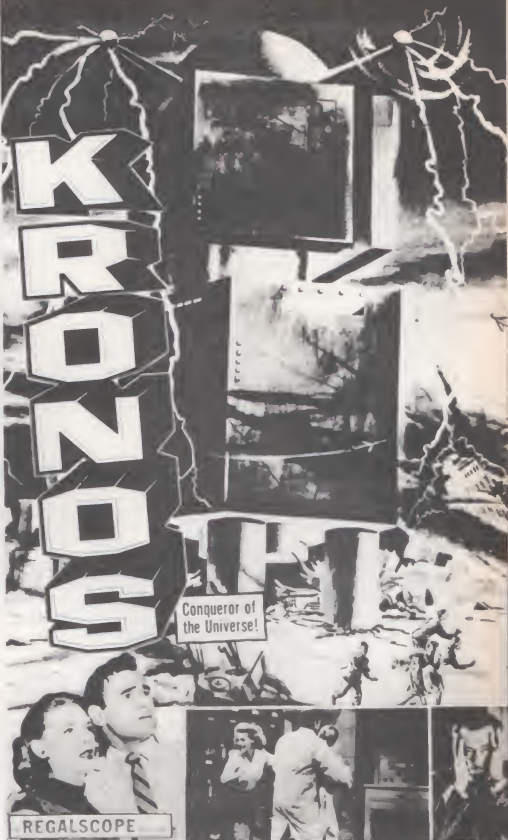
possessed by an alien life form they advise the American government to fire nuclear missiles at the asteroid and obliterate it before it crashes on Earth.

Although the rockets reach their target the explosive force of the atom bomb proves useless against the invader. Changing its direction the asteroid plummets down, crashing into the sea off the coast of New Mexico. After the attack on the invader, Dr Eliot is suddenly taken ill and transferred to hospital for treatment. Dr Gaskell, Prof Culver and Vera travel to New Mexico in an effort to catch sight of the submerged asteroid. After searching without success they are on the point of giving up when the mysterious ball of light rises out of the ocean like a huge silver disc. As darkness falls the light continues to glow far out across the horizon. When Gaskell, Culver and Vera awake in the morning they notice that the disc has disappeared, but instead on the nearby beach stands a giant machine. Standing over 100 feet high, the huge automaton glistens in the morning sun. It resembles two massive cubes mounted on a central column with four short legs. As they watch a dome rises out of the top of the cube followed by two antennae. Moving one antennae towards the sun it remains motionless.

Hiring a helicopter, the three scientists land on the top of the giant machine. Gaskell christens it Kronos, after the giant of Greek mythology. They witness some of the splendours of Kronos's interior mechanics when a section opens beneath their feet.

Presently, Kronos appears to tire of standing around doing nothing and, prompted by information transmitted telepathically by Eliot, stumps off across the countryside. Arriving at the Los Alamos electricity plant, it immediately begins to draw energy into its giant form. Once the robot has drained the station it moves on, automatically adding more steel plating to its huge bulk as it goes. Gaskell, in a flash of inspiration, realises that Kronos is not only impervious to large doses of energy but actually digests them, transforming the power into matter. The Mexican Air Force are summoned in an attempt to stop Kronos, but the planes are completely wiped out.

The possessed Eliot now sees the chance to feed Kronos the most concentrated energy source known to man, by confirming a White House order to use the atom bomb against the robot. Gaskell, still unaware that his colleague is a puppet of the alien, contests Eliot's decision realising the power it would give Kronos. Needless to say he fails and the bomb is dropped. Vera meanwhile begins to suggest there is something wrong with Eliot and decides she must inform Gaskell. But Eliot reaches her first and tries to electrocute her. Gaskell intervenes and Eliot falls into his own trap. The shock



REGALSCOPE

JEFF MORROW · BARBARA LAWRENCE · JOHN EMERY

GEORGE HANFORD · MORRI ARNOLD · KENNETH ALTON · JOHN PARRISH
 with IRMA RABIN, IRVING BLOCH and LORIS DEWITT · a comedy script by Irvin and directed by JACK RABIN
 with LORIS DEWITT · MENAPAD J. MULLADORTER · WILLIAM REINHOLD · GENE WARREN · Executive Producer IRVING BLOCH

Produced and Directed by KURT NEUMANN · Screenplay by LAWRENCE LOUIS GOLDMAN

A REGAL FILMS, INC. PRODUCTION · Released by 20th CENTURY FOX

momentarily restores his own mind and he races to warn Gaskell about the ultimate goal of Kronos.

The energy-draining robot is controlled by the inhabitants of a dying planet who desperately need energy as their own natural resources are running out. The aliens plan to drain the Earth dry by sending more devices like Kronos. Gaskell realizes that the atom bomb must not be dropped but although the air force bomber is recalled, the plane is yanked out of the air by the magnetic pull of Kronos and crashes. The bomb explodes causing the giant to expand and tower over the wilderness. Kronos, now thirsty for more atomic energy, heads up the coast towards the atom bomb stockpile outside Los Angeles.

Meanwhile, the alien light escapes Eliot's body, but cannot find its way out of the underground vault where the doctor has imprisoned himself. With no one to control Kronos' movements, the giant robot stampedes out of control, crushing cities as it goes. And as the west coast of America is being trampled, Gaskell, Culver and his computer, work on how to destroy Kronos. Gaskell's idea is to turn Kronos's power to convert energy into matter against it. With the object of



reversing the robot's polarity, a plane under Gaskell's instructions drops a canister of radioactive particles over the top of Kronos. As the monster absorbs the power of Los Angeles, the cannister



Left: The poster for the film. Top: Vana (Barbara Lawrence) and Gaskell (Jeff Morrow) relax on a beach. Above: The giant robot Kronos tramps across the country crushing people and buildings as it goes.

KRONOS ^A
 starring
 JEFF MORROW BARBARA LAWRENCE JOHN SMERY
 Produced and Directed by EURT NEUMANN
 Screenplay by LAWRENCE LOUIS GOLDMAN
 A Regal Films, Inc. Production Released by 19th Century Fox

explodes and the particles cause a chain reaction. Kronos begins to disintegrate, finally exploding into thousands of pieces. The Earth is saved.

Kronos was a low budget film with a simplistic plot — one that has been explored in many other movies. "Something" invades the Earth, tries to destroy or enslave us and is eventually wiped out by science turning its might upon itself — just as Frankenstein was killed by his own creation.

The most fascinating point about Kronos is the robot's unusual appearance. The image of the machine standing on the beach at the start of the film is still impressive even by today's standards. Unfortunately the scenes of Kronos marching across the countryside are a little disappointing. The scene was handled by Gene Warren using a cel animation technique. Warren was a member of Projects Unlimited which was a group of special effects experts that worked on films like *Master of the World* and George Pal's *Time Machine* and *Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm*. Not much footage of Kronos destroying cities is shown, although one shot of Kronos pulverising distant buildings is effectively combined with stock film.

Other special effects experts on Kronos included Irving Block (who also

wrote the story) and Jack Rabin. Between them they have put more fantasy films on the screen than almost any one else in the industry. Highlights from their extensive careers are *Forbidden Planet*, *The Giant Behemoth*, *The Invisible Boy*, *Monster from the Green Hell*, *Rocketship XM* and *Invaders from Mars*. Kurt Neumann, a German director who produced *Rocketship XM* and *The Fly*, produced and directed *Kronos*.

Jack Rabin's involvement with *Kronos* consisted of devising some of the mechanical effects. Two models of Kronos were constructed by Wah Chang and Gene Warren. A larger one for major effects and a tiny 6" version for long shots. The larger model of Kronos was not at all sophisticated. It had a couple of tiny motors that moved a pair of antennae around, but all other movement was achieved by stop-motion. As the team had no such luxuries as blue screens, alterations in the size of Kronos in relation to the backgrounds was achieved by physically replacing one scale model with another during filming.

A very complicated idea was included in the original script to show Kronos expanding after it absorbed energy, but the techniques were too costly. Eventually, the idea was abandoned for the more easily filmed superimposition of an

increasing cube over a stationary background. Irving Block who designed the robot, used simple model sets for the desert scenes. In some cases they were just sheets with sand scattered over them. But when combined with the effects of the planes attacking Kronos the sets look quite impressive. In the scene where the helicopter is supposed to land on top of Kronos, the producers utilised the top of the Hansen Dam. The sky and Kronos were superimposed on top of that.

Theobald Holsopple designed Prof Culver's laboratory and the computer was constructed out of egg cartons and other household items. The set is effective on the screen.

Of all the actors in the film Jeff Morrow comes over very convincingly as the scientist. Morrow's most famous screen role was Exeter in *This Island Earth*, but certainly his portrayal in *Kronos* is an enjoyable one. John Emery as Dr Eliot is unfortunately a little melodramatic, but likeable as the calculating villain.

With its miniscule budget of 160,000 dollars it is unfair to compare *Kronos* to such expensive major studio productions as *Forbidden Planet*. But the film certainly ranks as one of the best of the low budget sf movies of the 1950s.

Feature by Richard Holliss



Doctor Eliot (John Emery) attacks and kills his physician under the influence of the robot Kronos.

Kronos (1957)

Jeff Morrow (*as Doctor Les Gaskell*), George O'Hanlon (*Professor Culver*), Barbara Lawrence (*Vera*), John Emery (*Dr Eliot*), with Morris Ankrum, Kenneth Alton, John Parrish, Richard Harrison and Robert Shayne.

Produced and directed by Kurt Neumann. Screenplay by Irving Block. Art direction by Theobald Holsopple. Photographed by Karl Struss. Edited by Jodie Copelan. Music by Paul Sawrell. Special effects by Jack Rabin, Irving Block, Lewis DeWitt and George Warren. Executive producer E.J. Bumgarten. A Regal/Twentieth Century-Fox film.

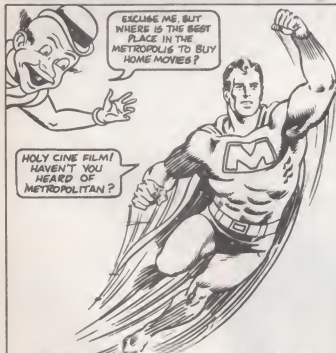
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BOOK WORLD

Reviews by Angela Montgomery

tures which enter and take over human bodies.

Quatermass and the Pit concerns an ancient artefact uncovered during excavations at Hobbs Lane in London. The artefact has had a long history of poltergeist activity and apparitions. It turns out that the artefact is a space ship containing a gaggle of long-dead Martian insects. And it is the machinery in the space ship that is responsible for the ghostly happenings in the area. Things take a serious turn when the space ship starts to effect the population of London, turning ordinary folk into a screaming, violent mob of savages. Ceres-trophe is averted when Quatermass discovers the secret of the Martians' power.

The passing of twenty years has not taken the edge off Kneale's taut story-telling technique. The characters are believable, the plots are well-paced and the concepts are intriguing, if a little pessimistic. The theme that runs through each of the three stories is loss of identity on an ever-increasing scale. With *The Quatermass Experiment* it is three men melded together and controlled by an alien life form. In *Quatermass II* a tiny section of the population is taken over by a collective entity. And in *Quatermass and the Pit* the inhabitants of London become the slaves of intelligent insects from Mars.

Each of the three books contains a picture section with rare stills from the TV series. And it is on these stills that the covers for *The Quatermass Experiment* and *Quatermass and the Pit* are based. But the cover for *Quatermass II* is Richard Wordsworth as Cerroon, the astronaut from the Hammer film *The Quatermass Experiment*. Somebody at Arrow Books slipped up!

Published by Arrow Books. 192 pages. 95p.



THE QUATERMASS CLASSICS SERIES
by Nigel Kneale

Afraid being unavailable for twenty years, these paperback editions of the scripts from the first three *Quatermass* TV series have been reprinted by Arrow Books, making them accessible to a whole new generation of fans.

Each script is the full, six-episode version – longer by far than the *Quatermass* movies made by Hammer films – though none suffer because of their length. In fact these TV scripts are somehow more exciting than their big screen counterparts.

The Quatermass Experiment (filmed in 1955 by Hammer as *The Quatermass Experiment*) is the disturbing tale of the sole survivor of Britain's first expedition into space who returns to Earth with the strange habit of absorbing living objects – initially plants, but later animals – into his body and taking on their physical characteristics. In the Hammer film version, adapted by Richard Landau and director Val Guest, Brian Donlevy, as a slightly less-composed Quatermass, electrocutes the resulting creature in Westminster Abbey. However, the ending of the TV version is quite different, less violent and perhaps more thought-provoking.

Quatermass II has Professor Bernard Quatermass designing the first moonbase and becoming perplexed when his pet project is discovered, full-size and operational, on Winnerton Flats in the English countryside. Posing as a government research station engaged in experiments into synthetic foods, the base is the centre for a silent invasion of Earth by crea-



QUATERMASS
by Nigel Kneale

Britain is ruled by anarchy. The streets are open battlefields for the two rival factions – the Badders and the Blue Brigade. The entire country is in the grip of fear, but nowhere more so than in London. And it is to London that the ageing Quatermass has come with one intention – to find his grand-daughter. He fears that she may have fallen victim to the madness that has seized the youth of the world, causing them to become blood-thirsty gang-members or crazed mystics known as the Planet People. The latter roam the country, guided by the forces emitted from prehistoric monuments. Once gathered in large numbers at these stone circles, they are struck by a blinding light and vanish – transported to a paradisiacal planet, according to the Planet People. But Quatermass perceives that an evil cosmic force is at work, seducing young people to their destruction and leaving the old in fear and confusion.

And so it is that Quatermass sets out to destroy this life-sucking force with the help of all the old people he can muster. His work culminates in a terrifying climax of human sacrifice.

It's a very strange and uncomfortable experience being forced to watch Britain plunged into irrevocable frenzy. But that's exactly the effect Nigel Kneale achieves in *Quatermass*, perhaps a little too convincingly for comfort. But even more disturbing is the master-stroke he underplays so beautifully in the Epilogue – the subtle suggestion that the whole process is just waiting to be triggered off again.

One criticism, though. Kneale's talent for

narrative is obvious, but he seems to fall down on characterization. Somehow Quatermass doesn't come across too strongly as a human character but more as a literary device. That



said, this niggling flaw detracts little from a hard-hitting and fascinating story.

Published by Arrow Books Ltd. 271 pages. 95p.

A STAR TREK CATALOG

edited by Gerry Turnbull

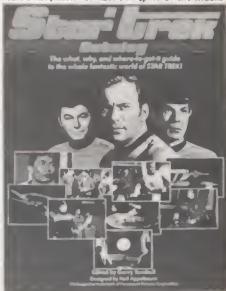
The only thing missing from this catalogue is the theme tune. It covers everything else. There's an interview with Gene Roddenberry (creator of Star Trek), a section on the American Conventions, profiles of the stars, a run-down of all the episodes, lots of stills and in fact it's just about everything a devoted Trekker could hope for.

But I can't help feeling that the average British fan is going to feel a little alienated. I mean it's all so, well, *American*. After all, the American fandom is on a scale which would be inconceivably vast in British terms. Not only that but the excesses to which the Americans go in praising their beloved show is a little bewildering to we reserved British. The stars of Star Trek emerge from this book as demi-gods. But then, as it says on page 25, "Star Trek is more than a TV show; it is an ideal, or rather a series of images showing an almost universal ideal in action".

But apart from that sort of mush, this is a very informative book. It gives you the names and addresses of all the various fan clubs and a catalogue of the numerous licensed products available. There is also a section on related

books. This includes excerpts from a hilarious publication called *Trek or Treat*, it's a picture book of the Star Trek stars with very amusing speech balloons added.

The Star Trek phenomenon may be big, but it's going to be even bigger with the releases of Paramount's Star Trek - The Motion Picture. So, no doubt this timely little package is going to do very well for itself. In spite of the mush.



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SCIENCE FICTION ON TELEVISION



This month we begin a two-part look at the progress of science fiction and fantasy on television in which Tise Vahimagi looks at a wide variety of shows from *Captain Video* to *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*.



How many fans of science fiction would openly raise their hands in support of television sf? In private, quite a few. In public, not many. Somehow it seems almost fashionable — socially acceptable, even — to deride television, whatever genre it may offer.

Fans of science fiction literature try hard to deny its existence, for they are

too busy keeping a harsh critical eye on the big-screen product. The sf movie fan, usually possessing a much wider scope of tolerance and understanding for visual drama, is prepared to look in on an episode or two of a tv science fiction series, but somehow always appears to be ready to condemn the medium when others raise a quizzical eyebrow.

Television, it seems, is expected to produce unlimited visual wonders alongside cerebral concepts — while still conforming to its tag of being a "vast wasteland". Television came about as a composition of radio, theatre and cinema, utilising all three ingredients to create a whole new medium of audio-visual entertainment. As such, it should be viewed



Left: George Reeves diving out of a window to land on a mattress. In this behind-the-scenes photo from the Superman television series. Below: The lobster-like monsters from Irwin Allen's *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*.

and evaluated on its own terms and within its own limitations. Only then can the small-screen genre of science fiction be examined honestly.

The earliest science fiction series to appear on television came in the form of *Captain Video* in 1949, via the now-defunct DuMont network in America. The show ran for four years, during which time actor Richard Coogan handed

***Captain Video* was a rather crude space-opera.**

the role of Captain Video over to Al Hodge, who is generally associated with the part. A rather crude space-opera, this show has nothing to distinguish it other than being the first of its kind. It paved the way in outlandish gadgetry and pretentious space jargon for such later series as *Rod Brown of the Rocket Rangers*, *Atom Squad*, *Captain Z-Ro*, *Jet Jackson*, *Flying Commando* and *Space Patrol*. Of the latter show, trade journal *Variety* said: "Space Patrol, a filmed science-fictioner for juves, when slotted in a morning slot or before the kiddies' bedtime can be an awfully disturbing item for moppets. Filled with a disapp-

earing spaceman and with villainous laughter from an unseen baddie, *Space Patrol* can give the kids a bad case of the creeps."

Another member of the early 1950s juvenile space-opera circuit was *Buck Rogers*, based on the comic strip by Phil Nowlan (which had also been the source for the 1939 Universal chapter-play). Premiering in 1950, the *Buck Rogers* tv series began with a tale about a couple of "tiger men" from Mercury who attempt to drain off all the water on Earth in a bid to conquer the universe.

The *Adventures of Superman* began in 1953, and continued running for four years. Starring George Reeves as Superman/Clark Kent, the series was one of the earliest filmed in colour. The special effects and scripts are embarrassingly dated but the early form of tv colour is pleasing and the show is a Fifties' legend.

On the British side of the Atlantic, BBC-tv were the first to attempt any form of science fiction for English television. Making its debut on July 18,



1953, was *The Quatermass Experiment*, a six-part serial penned by Nigel Kneale and produced by Rudolph Cartier. It went out with a warning to "persons of a nervous disposition" and was an instant success. Two years later the Kneale-Cartier team produced *Quatermass 2*, again in six-parts, which saw Professor Bernard Quatermass (originally played by

Reginald Tate, the role was taken over for this sequel by John Robinson) investigate a sinister alien project located in a remote area of the country. In December, 1958, *Quatermass and the Pit* was aired. Possibly one of the most frightening excursions into science fiction on British television, this six-parter was a superb combination of sf and supernatural drama. The story involved the discovery of an alien space craft which unleashed its demonic power over London's East End. All three *Quatermass* serials were later turned into feature films by Hammer Films.

In a 1977 interview, Nigel Kneale commented on his *Quatermass* work: "The *Quatermass Experiment* had a sinister figure moving through society, someone returning from space infected. In *Quatermass 2* it was society itself that had been infected before the action starts. If the hero was to save the world yet again in the third story, the premise had to be different in some way – so humanity had been infected a long time

The Creature was an intelligent Abominable Snowman.

before the story begins. It was partly a pattern-making, structural thing."

The Rudolph Cartier-Nigel Kneale duo also presented tv viewers with the then-controversial (1954) production of George Orwell's 1984 starring Peter Cushing, Donald Pleasence and Andre Morell (tv's third *Quatermass*), and *The Creature*, which involved intelligent Abominable Snowmen in the Himalayas. (Note: Don't miss the Nigel Kneale interview elsewhere this issue.)

In 1956, two shows telecast on the commercial channel, over the ATV network, also went before the big-screen cameras following their tv appearance. The first, *The Strange World of Planet X*,

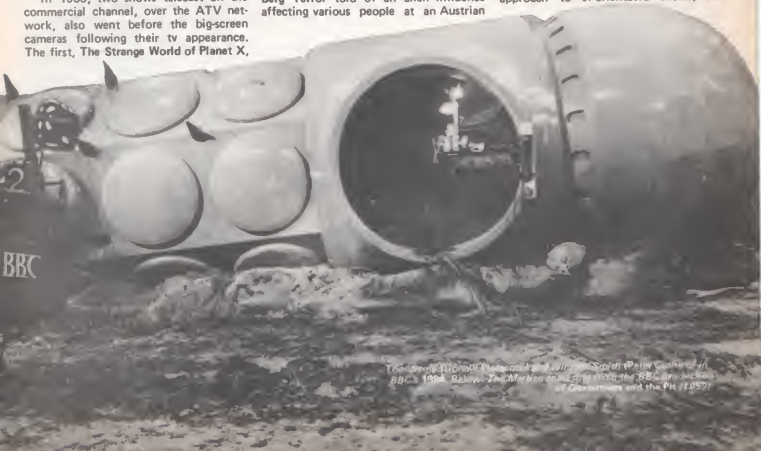


written by Rene Ray, began on September 15, 1956, and was produced-directed by Arthur Lane and Quentin Lawrence. This was a six-part serial dealing with an accidental breakthrough to the fourth dimension – or "Planet X" – and featured Helen Cherry, William Lucas and David Garth in lead roles. Later that same year, on December 15, Peter Key's *The Trollenberg Terror* premiered with *The Mind of Ann Pilgrim* (episode one of six parts). Quentin Lawrence was at the helm once again, as producer-director, with Sarah Lawson, Rosemary Miller and Laurence Payne heading the cast. Made into a feature in 1958 by Eros Productions, *The Trollenberg Terror* told of an alien influence affecting various people at an Austrian

resort located at the foot of the towering Trollenberg mountain. The aliens weren't "revealed" – if that is actually the word for it – until the fourth episode, entitled *The Power of the Ixodes*.

The 1950s were really a "growing up" period for television, especially in terms of science fiction/fantasy production and programming. The early sf shows, for the most part, were aimed exclusively at the young market. British series, however, did cater for the more mature viewer, although juvenile programmers like *Planet Patrol* and *The Invisible Man* were still being greeted with glee by the after-school rush.

The 1960s ushered in a more "adult" approach to sf-orientated shows; the



The first of the British science fiction series, *The Strange World of Planet X*, was produced by the BBC and aired in 1956. Below: *The Mind of Ann Pilgrim*, episode one of the six-part serial *The Trollenberg Terror*, and the *PH* (1957).



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American production outfits were particularly bent on creating a more sophisticated look to their tv series, with the hope of covering the spectrum between the youth and adult audiences.

Britain's Associated - Rediffusion network presented John Lymington's *The Night of the Big Heat* as a part of the continuing *Play of the Week* series, on June 14, 1960. Adapted for tv by Giles Cooper, from Lymington's novel, the one-off play dramatically presented the story of a group of people experiencing a tremendous heatwave caused by intruding aliens. Patrick Holt, Melissa Stribling, Lee Montague and Bernard Cribbins filled the featured roles. Getting the actors to play as if in a real heatwave was — reportedly — a problem for director Cyril Coke.

Julie Christie was the android in *A for Andromeda*.

Prior to telecast, Coke stated that "it means we have got to get the actors looking hot and bothered — and a real heatwave on transmission day would do the trick." Coke's solution was simple: "We shall have to turn up the studio heating system."

1961 introduced Fred Hoyle & John Elliot's *A for Andromeda*, a seven-part serial about the construction of an android (in the alluring shape of Julie Christie) based on instructions sent down from the Andromeda galaxy. A popular serial at the time, it was followed-up some seven months later by *The Andromeda Breakthrough*, with Susan Hampshire playing the robot "Andromeda." Both serials were well produced and offered intelligent scripts and portrayals.

Almost by way of countering BBC-tv's second *Andromeda* serial, ABC-tv network telecast its own sf show — the anthology series *Out of This World*. Produced by Leonard White, the series featured adaptations of work by such authors as Rog Phillips (premiere episode *The Yellow Pill*), Isaac Asimov (*Little Lost*

Anderson's first sf show, *Supercar*, debuted in 1959.

Robot, Philip K. Dick (*Imposter*), Raymond F. Jones (*Divided We Fall*) and Clifford Simak (*Target Generation*). Terry Nation wrote the teleplay for many of the stories, as well as contributing original material, and Boris Karloff introduced each episode. This show is often confused with the 1969 BBC anthology *Out of the Unknown*. Understandably so, as both not only had similar sounding titles but the latter also featured stories by Isaac Asimov and Clifford Simak (*Target Generation* also appeared in this series). Other authors of note whose work was dramatised on *Out of the Unknown* included John Brunner (*The Last Lonely Man*), John Wyndham (*Random Quest*)

and C.M. Kornbluth (*The Little Black Bag*).

During the mid-Sixties Gerry Anderson and his Supermarionation outfit hit the heights with a one-hour puppet series, called *Thunderbirds*. The Anderson puppet productions go back to 1956 but it was with *Supercar* (in 1959) that he introduced his first science fiction series. He followed *Supercar* with *Fireball XL5* and *Stingray* in the early '60s. *Stingray* was the first colour tv series to be filmed in Britain, and the next step up had to be the highly popular *Thunderbirds* series,



starting in 1964. The show went on to create two feature films, *Thunderbirds are Go!* (1966) and *Thunderbird Six* (1968). In 1967, Anderson produced *Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons*; the following year saw the appearance of *Joe 90*. The rarely-seen *Secret Service* show was Anderson's first attempt at combining his puppets alongside live action; only 13 episodes were filmed.

Gerry Anderson's first live action series was *UFO*, operating around the theme of an anti-UFO organisation called *SHADO* which is aimed at safeguarding Earth from an extraterrestrial threat. The show, which over-emphasised its gadgetry and under-played its live action drama, with Ed Bishop (as Commander Straker), head of *SHADO*, George Sewell, Wanda

Dr Who is the longest running sf series in tv history.

Ventham and Peter Gorden in the cast lineup. Much more exciting, initially, was the later *Space: 1999* series, despite its silly premise: the personnel of a scientific base situated on the moon become helpless castaways when the moon is blasted out of its orbit into the vastness of space. The show's special effects — particularly interior explosions — were of a high standard, elevating weak scripts and enlivening formula plots.

1963 was the year that BBC-tv recruited William Hartnell to step inside an old



Top: Christopher Lee as he appeared in the episode *Earthbound*, *Space 1999*. Above left: The creature from the episode *The Outer Limits*, *The Mice*. Above: *Loise Lane* (Noel Neill) and *Jimmy Olsen* (Jack Larson) find themselves a little tied up in *The Jolly Roger*, from the *Supercar* tv series (1954).



Below:
George Reeves in *Superman* 1954.

police telephone box to make Doctor Who, the longest running sf series in television history. The Doctor has undergone many visual changes since the series first began, but the Tardis — his time-and-space craft — and the imaginative plots continue as always. It was veteran actor William Hartnell who personified the "Time Lord" and engaged such curious creatures as the Zarbi, the Cybermen and the amazingly popular Daleks. After some sixteen years it seems that the good Doctor has set foot on just about every planet in every galaxy and has been present at every time in Earth's history and future. Which must be why at various times he has also appeared in the guises of Patrick Troughton, Jon Pertwee and Tom Baker. One of the rare delicacies that the



series has had to offer came in the form of the late Roger Delgado, alias The Master, a superb villain of the highest order.

Also offering imagination by installment on British telescreens during the '60s were Adam Adamant, The Champions, Counterstrike and the remarkable series *The Prisoner*. The latter show is a triumph of creative endeavour in the overly commercial spectrum of small-screen fantasy. The beauty of it was that the star, Patrick McGoochan, not only created the series but acted as executive producer, sometime director and author of a couple of episodes. The concept of *The Prisoner* (essentially, a fight for individuality) is entirely McGoochan's, and as such it stands as a landmark in tv production.

American television entered the Sixties with one of the legends of small-screen sf — Rod Serling's *The Twilight Zone*. Creator, producer, author and host Rod Serling introduced each episode; a typical Serling intro would begin "There is a fifth dimension beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as vast as space and as timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and shadow, between science and superstition and it lies between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge. It is an area which we call *The Twilight Zone*." The 5-year series was a finely balanced package of science fiction and science fantasy, employing Richard Matheson (*Third from the Sun*, *The Invaders*, *Once Upon a Time*, etc), Charles Beaumont (*Elegy*, *The Fugitive*, *Number 12 Looks Just Like You*, etc) and Serling himself (*I Shot an Arrow into the Air*, *The Monsters are Due on Maple Street*, *Probe 7 — Over and Out*, etc) among the creative scribes during the run of the show. The reviewer for *Hollywood Reporter* summed up the show's opening segment (*Where is Everybody?*) with "This debut scored with dramatic impact infrequently found when the tv camera attempts to focus on the fringes of fantasy, and while short on insight, it was strong on style and solidly suspenseful."

The Outer Limits served up some of the best scripts on tv.

ABC-tv gave birth in 1963 to one of television's rare journeys into intelligent science fiction—*The Outer Limits*. Totally misunderstood from the beginning, the medium that brought it to light didn't know where, exactly, to slot the show. It had a good response from the early evening teenage audience, who were delighted with the bizarre visuals, but when the series was programmed into a late night slot for adult viewers it proved too sophisticated and died a premature death. Created by Leslie Stevens and produced by Joseph Stefano, *The Outer Limits*, in its peak period, served up some of the best scripts, directors, photography and special effects ever seen in a fantasy television series. Featured among the show's highlights were Leslie Stevens' *The Galaxy Being*, Stefano's *The Zanti Misfits* and *The Invisibles*, and Harlan Ellison's *Soldier and Demon* with a *Glass Hand*—the latter segment winning the coveted Hugo Award. Alongside the creative explorations of *Star Trek*, *The Outer Limits* stands as a supreme achievement of sf television.

September 1964 saw the first of the Irwin Allen sf action series, *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*. Based on Allen's 1961 big-screen spectacular of the same title, the tv series used the characters and submarine (the *Seaview*), along with most of the footage, from the feature film. A



trade journal reviewer forecast a favourable future for the show: "Creator and producer Irwin Allen in *Eleven Days to Zero*, first of this new 20th-Fox series, has infused necessity for one of those exciting dramatic shows that is gripping and nail-biting for viewers who prefer to forget romance unless it's with a sub called Seaview.

"This undersea voyage should travel a long, long way if the pace set by the starter is any criterion."

It wasn't. By the time of the show's third season opener, *Monster from the Inferno*, the attitude of the reviewers had changed somewhat: "Despite the absurdity of the story, the characters assembled in this so-called nuclear sub held the interest and built suspense to the point where you didn't care about the story but just about how the crew would overcome

Irwin Allen generally dominated mid-sixties fantasy television.

the radiated power from an unknown substance from the sea, which had to bring havoc to all concerned.

"The substance is called a monster. At first it is inanimate until crew members start tinkering with it at the bottom of the sea with a laser spear device. Then suddenly, it comes to life, throws rays upon men's faces, speaks to them, orders them about and finally assumes the form of the sub itself. Is this sci-fi at its weirdest or not?"

The Irwin Allen school of sf action-adventure generally dominated mid-sixties fantasy television—that is until the advent of *Star Trek* and *The Invaders*. In Part Two of this feature we will be taking a look at both these shows, along with *The Time Tunnel*, *Blake's 7*, *Six Million Dollar Man*, *Project UFO*, and *Sapphire and Steel* among others that have made up the last fifteen years of science fiction on television.



Above: A scene from Irwin Allen's first sf tv series *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*.



A montage of scenes from Gerry Anderson's first live-action sf tv series, *UFO*, which starred Ed Bishop as Commander Straker, director of Shado.



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